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APPLECORN'S ADVENTURE

A Play in Three Acts

By WALTER HACKETT



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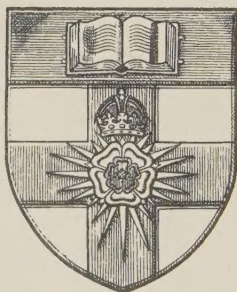
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AMBROSE APPLEJOHN'S ADVENTURE

An Arabian Nights Entertainment in
Three Acts

BY
WALTER HACKETT

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WITHDRAWN

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AMBROSE APPLEJOHN'S ADVENTURE

First produced in London at the Criterion Theatre, July 19th, 1921. Last performance (the 454th) August 19th, 1922.

Understand

LUSH	<i>D. Kay</i>	Mr. Arthur Fayne.	
POPPY FAIRE	<i>F. Porter</i>	Miss Marion Lorne.	<i>J. Paterson</i>
AGATHA WHATCOMBE	<i>A. Bryan</i>	Miss Mona Harrison.	
AMBROSE APPLEJOHN	<i>N. Balfour</i>	Mr. Charles Hawtrey.	<i>Joyce H.B.</i>
ANNA VALESKA	<i>J. H. Begg</i>	Miss Hilda Moore.	<i>D. Paterson</i>
PENGARD	<i>D. Paterson</i>	Mr. Edward Rigby.	<i>P. Bryan</i>
MRS. PENGARD	<i>H. Chardley</i>	Miss Annie Esmond.	
IVAN BOROLSKY	<i>H. Baird</i>	Mr. Leslie Faber.	
MARIE	<i>J. Paterson</i>	Miss Winifred McCarthy.	
DENNET	<i>E. Barnett</i>	Mr. Wilson Blake.	
JOHNNY JASON	<i>C. Campbell</i>	Mr. H. V. Surrey.	

The SCENE of the play is laid in the Library of Ambrose Applejohn's house in Cornwall—One Winter's Night.

Three hours are supposed to elapse between the First and Second Acts. There is no lapse between Acts Two and Three.

Paterson

Prompter

6 D. Wildshaw

2 H. Dexter

1 P. Bryan

P. May

5 J. Paterson

3 B. Donkers

4 C. Miller

V. Mackinnon

horis 4 days S. Duff

Ass Stage Manager

Stagehands

P. Burrows stage property
M. Miller personal property
Stage Hands & make up

D. Spain *Lights*

3. Duff

H. Smith *Lights*

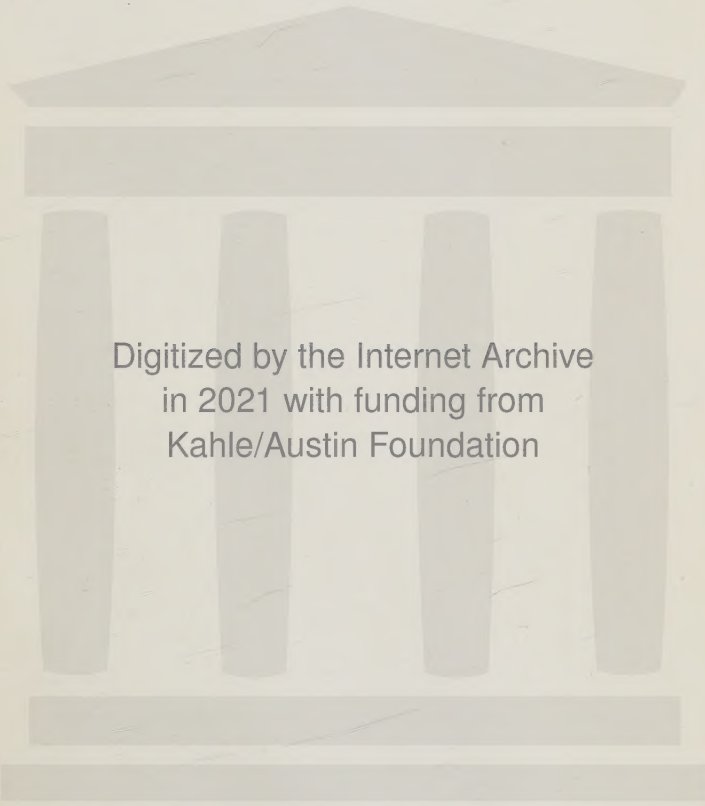
Proprietor *& cloaks*

E. Sanfer with 9 new pairs

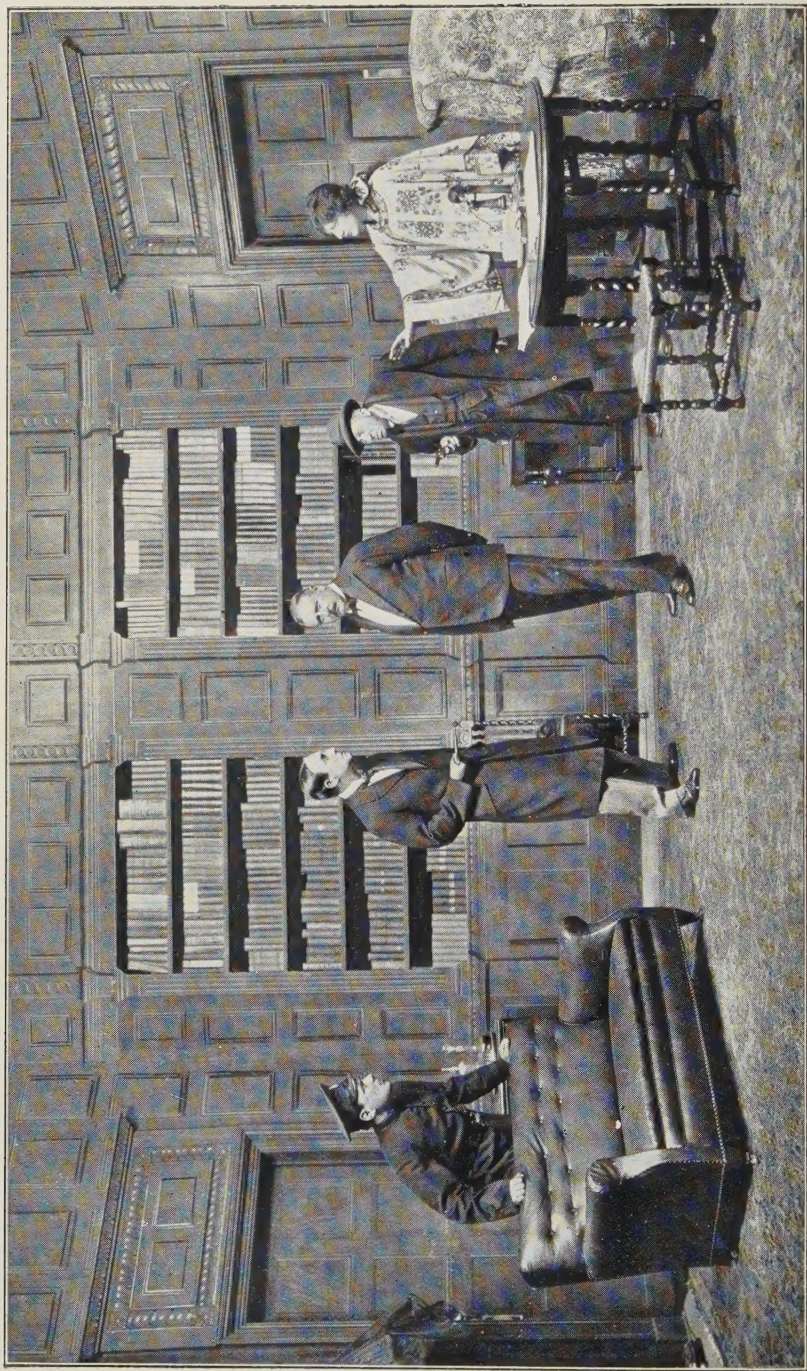
Curtains

E. Wetherill

Jane May



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AMBROSE APPLEJOHN'S ADVENTURE

ACT I

SCENE.—*The library in AMBROSE APPLEJOHN'S home—an old house in a lonely spot on the coast of Cornwall. In its every detail, from the massive stone fireplace to the dark panelled walls and heavily beamed ceiling, the room has the flavour of mellowed antiquity. There lingers about it, too, a subtle suggestion of mystery. Sombre shadows lurk in its corners—it is an irregularly shaped room—shadows that no amount of light is ever able quite to dispel. It is arranged as in the accompanying picture and the diagram given at p. 79. At the opening the arm-chair is set against the wall below door L. The time is a night during the present winter.*

When the CURTAIN rises, the stage is vacant and lit only by the soft glow from the fire. Outside a fierce storm is raging. The wind whistles about the corners of the house and rattles the windows in their casements. Even above this can be heard the boom of the waves as they beat against the coast.

(After a brief pause, LUSH, the butler, an aged man—evidently an old family retainer—indeed he is filling the place his father and his father's father filled before him—enters door L., crosses to standard lamp R. and switches it on. He then crosses to L. and switches on brackets over fireplace, and the reading lamp on table L.C. (N.B.—This lamp must not give a brilliant light.) He then picks up the poker and stirs the fire when POPPY enters L. She is an old-fashioned person with an old-fashioned manner and old-fashioned ways. There is something about her that always seems to suggest a breath of lavender. She comes in hurriedly by the door L. and it is evident that she is labouring under considerable excitement.)

POPPY *(crossing to R.C. and turning to LUSH, standing above the settee. Her voice is agitated).* Lush—

LUSH. Yes, miss. *(At fireplace.)*

POPPY. Is everything as it should be?

LUSH. Yes, miss.

POPPY. Are you sure?

LUSH. It isn't my habit to forget things— *(Moving up between the table and fireplace towards the door L.)*

POPPY. Of course I know that, but—— (*Moving to the back of the settee.*)

LUSH. Everything is quite in order, miss.

POPPY (*with a sigh of relief*). Then you may bring coffee.

LUSH. Thank you, miss.

(*He turns to go off L. POPPY still looks searchingly about the room. She goes up R.C. to revolving bookcase, and brings down knitting to C. She suddenly starts with dismay.*)

POPPY. Oh . . . Lush!

LUSH (*turning back to her*). Yes, miss.

POPPY. Mr. Applejohn's chair! You haven't moved it down to the fire.

LUSH (*aghast*). Dear me, miss, so I haven't.

(*The chair at the opening of the Act is up against the wall above the fire.*)

(*Wheeling the chair forward as he speaks.*) My memory ain't what it used to be in the old days, miss. This is the second time I've forgotten Mr. Applejohn's chair this year.

POPPY. How fortunate I noticed it! He would be upset if everything were not precisely as usual. (*Dropping down R.C. in front of the settee.*)

LUSH (*at the back of the arm-chair*). He wouldn't know what to make of it.

(*MRS. WHATCOMBE enters L. and comes C. A handsome grey-haired old lady. She wears always a fussy, harassed manner. At the moment, she is as agitated as POPPY.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*slightly up stage, looking about quickly as she comes down*). Lush, you haven't brought the coffee.

LUSH (*who, as MRS. WHATCOMBE moves C., goes to door L.*). No, madam, I was about to.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*sharply*). Then make haste. You know that Mr. Applejohn always expects to find it here when he comes from dinner.

LUSH. Yes, madam.

(*He goes out L.*)

(*The instant the door closes behind him, MRS. WHATCOMBE turns agitatedly to POPPY, a step down stage.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*with considerable nervous intensity*). Poppy!

POPPY. Yes, Aunt Agatha. (*Moving slightly to MRS. WHATCOMBE'S R.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE. What can be the matter with Ambrose?

POPPY. You mean about the Christmas pudding?

MRS. WHATCOMBE. He never touched a morsel.

POPPY. I know—and he simply dotes on grilled Christmas pudding with brandy sauce.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. If it were only the pudding . . . but he has not been a bit like himself all day, and that is very strange because the Applejohns are always like themselves. It is a family trait. There must be something seriously wrong.

POPPY (*alarmed*). Oh, Aunt Agatha, don't say that! (*Crosses to L. of MRS. WHATCOMBE.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*inexorably*). There must be. You know how he dislikes changes of any kind—and now he has changed himself. I feel as if some great tragedy were impending. (*Crosses to settee R.C. and sits upon it.*)

POPPY. Oh, I don't think it is as serious as all that. Perhaps it is only the east wind. (*At stool L. of table L.C.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*indignantly*). And what has the east wind to do with Ambrose? (*Picks up knitting off settee.*)

POPPY. Well, I have been reading a most interesting animal story—"Tarzan of the Apes" it is called, and—

MRS. WHATCOMBE. It has always been a characteristic of the Applejohns that they were never influenced by the weather. Besides, there was no wind this morning, and you know what happened at family prayers.

POPPY. Oh, wasn't it awful?

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Awful! While he was reading the lesson he forgot his place three times, and on each occasion had to begin all over again.

POPPY (*sitting on the stool*). It made it very difficult to follow clearly, didn't it?

MRS. WHATCOMBE. I can't understand it. I can't understand it at all.

POPPY. No!

(*There is a pause during which it is clear that POPPY is summoning up courage to ask a question. Presently, with a great effort, she manages to speak.*)

Er—Aunt Agatha . . .

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Well?

POPPY. Do you think that perhaps the trouble with Ambrose is that he . . . that he . . . that he is in love?

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*amazed*). In love? Ambrose?

POPPY (*tremulously*). Er . . . yes.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Good gracious!

POPPY (*quickly. Much agitated*). You know they all say that loss of appetite is one of the first symptoms, and—

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*interrupting sharply*). Don't be absurd, Poppy! Who could he be in love with?

(*POPPY is taken aback by this direct question. It is quite clear to*

the audience, though not to MRS. WHATCOMBE, whom she hopes he is in love with.)

POPPY. Well . . . er . . . er . . . of course I couldn't say that—but he has lost his appetite, hasn't he?

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Why, he never sees any women but you and me!

POPPY. No——

MRS. WHATCOMBE. In love at his age—ridiculous! Of course he is not in love.

POPPY (*discouraged*). Well, I—I only suggested that he might be.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*severely*). You can make up your mind that he isn't.

POPPY (*with a sigh*). Yes . . . I suppose I can.

(LUSH *enters with coffee on tray. He places this on small table up L.C. and brings the table with coffee on it and places it beside POPPY L.C.*)

LUSH. Coffee, madam?

MRS. WHATCOMBE. No, thank you . . . er—Lush—had Mr. Applejohn finished his port?

LUSH (*who has stepped back a pace*). Mr. Applejohn did not take port to-night, madam.

(*The ladies exchange startled glances.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE	} (<i>aghast</i>)	{ No port?
POPPY		

LUSH. No, madam.

(*The two women exchange glances again.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*recovering her poise*). Thank you, Lush. That will do.

LUSH. Thank you, madam.

(LUSH *goes out L.*)

(MRS. WHATCOMBE *watches him off, then turns tragically to POPPY.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*in a funereal voice*). No port! It is even worse than I feared! (*She rises and suddenly rouses herself to action.*) Poppy, is everything as it should be? (*She stands in front of the settee, her back to the audience, looking round the room.*)

POPPY. Yes, I think so. (*Rises and looks round at things, passing below the table round and above it.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Is everything in its proper place?

POPPY (*still looking about at the top of table L.C.*). Yes.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Then let us sit as we always do. There must not be anything unusual in our attitude to-night. (*She re-seats herself on the settee.*)

(POPPY comes from the back of the table and perches on the edge of her stool, her nervousness only too plainly apparent. MRS. WHATCOMBE eyes her sourly. In order to make the picture more convincing MRS. WHATCOMBE picks up a copy of "Country Life" and turns the pages restlessly without looking at them. Presently she glances at the paper for the first time, and now suddenly pauses, horror-struck, as she stares at it.)

Good gracious! No . . . it can't be. Yes, it is. (*Rising.*) Good heavens!

POPPY (*rises, and going to her L.*). Why, what—

MRS. WHATCOMBE. See—isn't that a picture of this house?

POPPY (*looking at the paper*). Why, so it is.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*feeling for them vainly*). My glasses . . . where are my glasses? (*Unable to find them, she gives up the search and thrusts the paper into POPPY's hands.*) Read it, Poppy. What does it say?

POPPY (*reading*). To Yachtsmen, Americans and others—

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Yachtsmen, Americans and others—what an odd assortment!

POPPY (*still reading*). An old-world house on the Coast of Cornwall with magnificent Marine views, built on gravel soil with all modern improvements, including electric light, for Sale.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*greatly shocked, with a slight turn to R. and back*). For Sale! Ambrose has put this place up for sale?

POPPY (*reading*). Twenty bed- and dressing-rooms, rose garden with sundial.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*like a Tragedy Queen*). The ancient home of the Applejohns for sale! Why, it has been in our family for generations. And now Ambrose is going to sell it to Yachtsmen, Americans and others. Some great disaster must have overtaken him. (*Moves again a little R.*)

POPPY (*with a step or two towards MRS. WHATCOMBE*). Disaster! Aunt Agatha, you don't mean—

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Take care! There is Ambrose. (*She motions towards the door L.*)

POPPY (*turning to face the door*). Oh! Goodness!

(*Evidently AMBROSE APPLEJOHN is coming. POPPY gives MRS. WHATCOMBE the paper and hurries back to her stool, where she sits in the strained position she has rehearsed. MRS. WHATCOMBE sits on the settee again and turns the pages restlessly.*)

(AMBROSE APPLEJOHN enters. He is a man in the early forties, who has settled down, as the saying is. At the moment his accustomed easy-going disposition seems sadly ruffled. As he enters, he pauses for a space by the door. Both women turn to him with fixed welcoming smiles. He looks from one to the other gloomily and with no response. Then he turns to his accustomed arm-chair by the fire,

but after taking one step towards it, he changes his mind and, still without speaking, crosses to R. at the back of the settee and arranges the curtains at the window R. He then sits on the stool down R., below the windows, upon which, as it has no back, he is obviously most uncomfortable. There he remains in glum silence, staring straight before him. The two women exchange nervous glances. Presently MRS. WHATCOMBE gains the courage to speak.)

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Ambrose! *(She waits for him to answer, but he does not. This confuses her, but she goes bravely on.)* Er . . . don't you think you would be more comfortable if you sat in your arm-chair before the fire?

AMBROSE. No.

(The ladies exchange glances. POPPY pours out a cup of coffee.)

MRS. WHATCOMBE. But . . . but you always do sit there after dinner.

AMBROSE. That is the reason I do not wish to do so to-night. . . . I feel the need of a change.

(MRS. WHATCOMBE is quite at a loss. She glances despairingly at POPPY. The latter is galvanized into action. POPPY picks up a cup of coffee—her trembling fingers cause the cup to rattle violently against the saucer—and rising, crosses to AMBROSE R. with coffee, in front of the settee.)

POPPY *(tremulously)*. Am . . . Ambrose!

AMBROSE *(without looking at her)*. Well?

POPPY. Your . . . your coffee.

AMBROSE. I don't care for any, thank you.

POPPY. But . . . but you always take coffee after dinner.

AMBROSE. As I said just now . . . I feel the need of a change.

(POPPY can think of nothing further to say. She turns and goes back to her stool. Replacing coffee in tray. Again the women exchange glances. Then, with the "Country Life" in her hand, MRS. WHATCOMBE rises majestically, crosses to POPPY and takes her right hand in her left and drawing her from her seat stands with her hand in hers, and turns to AMBROSE.)

MRS. WHATCOMBE *(heroically)*. Ambrose, I am an Applejohn and Poppy is second cousin through the Canadian branch to the Applejohns.

AMBROSE. An accurate statement, but its application eludes me.

MRS. WHATCOMBE *(not heeding him)*. Therefore we are both strong enough to bear any blow. You may have no hesitation in telling us the worst.

AMBROSE *(solemnly)*. Aunt Agatha, I am growing old.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Pooh! You are only forty.

AMBROSE. Forty . . . and a bit.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. But I still don't see why you wish to sell this house. (*Leaving POPPY and advancing a little R.C.*)

AMBROSE. It was Johnny Jason who advised me to sell it.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Johnny Jason? The man who sold you the second-hand motor-car that won't run?

AMBROSE. He says he can sell anything. He promised to sell this place in a week. You see, I saw him a day or so after my return from Exeter and confided in him. He pointed out to me that it was not my years but this house that was ageing me.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Well, upon my word!

AMBROSE. So I gave him a commission to dispose of it, and at the same time sent that advertisement to "Country Life"—but I haven't had any response from either. I felt certain I would have some word by this morning's post, but nothing came—it has upset me greatly.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. How on earth can this house be ageing you?

AMBROSE. It keeps me in the rut.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. The rut?

AMBROSE. Yes, I do the same things at the same time in the same way every day, not because I want to, but because I did the same things at the same time in the same way yesterday, and the reason I did them yesterday was that I did them the day before, and the reason I did them the day before—— As Jason says, it isn't age, but monotony, that's ageing me, and he's right.

POPPY. But with all the trouble we have in keeping servants nowadays, you can't say it's monotonous here.

AMBROSE (*rises and turns up stage behind the settee to C.* MRS. WHATCOMBE *turns to the lower end of the settee facing AMBROSE and POPPY stands a little above her in front of the settee.*) I am going out in the world and find my youth again. I am going to see life—to seek adventure, romance.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. But, Ambrose, that is not respectable.

AMBROSE. Jason says that the good die young, and the respectable grow old quickly—and I have always been intensely respectable.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. But why must you sell this place?

AMBROSE. Because, with taxes what they are, I can't make you and Poppy a proper allowance, keep up this place and travel.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. I never heard of such a thing! (*She throws "Country Life" on to the settee.*)

AMBROSE. Can't you understand?—it's the monotony of my life—I am sick of it, sick to death of it. (*As he speaks he turns to the top of the table L.C., where his smoking things are arranged.*) See these—that's my life—all of it. Everything arranged for me as usual. The same thing day after day. If I had to take the trouble to look for something occasionally it would be a relief. (*He tosses the things about helter-skelter and moves to the front of the fire.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*on the verge of tears, moving across to the R. of*

the table L.C.). Ambrose, how can you say such things, when Poppy and I devote our lives to waiting on you?

AMBROSE. That's it, that is what I can't bear any longer. If something unexpected doesn't happen to me, I shall be in a nursing home.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*her emotion overcoming her*). Ambrose, how can you be so cruel?

AMBROSE. Aunt Agatha, don't cry. I know how good you have been to me: you have been too good, that's the trouble.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. I think it is awful! (*She turns up L.C.*)

(POPPLY goes up to her on her R. and tries to soothe her.)

AMBROSE (*moving up to her L., soothingly*). Now—now——

MRS. WHATCOMBE. I am going to my room. (*She crosses Ambrose towards the door L.*)

AMBROSE (*behind her*). No—no!

MRS. WHATCOMBE. I must. It is my regular hour. You know I always go to my room at nine-thirty.

(AMBROSE shrugs his shoulders helplessly. MRS. WHATCOMBE stands by the door still in tears.)

Goo-Good . . . good night, both. (*She goes out door L.*)

AMBROSE (*looking after her helplessly*). I am sorry I made her cry, but I had to tell her. (*He comes down to his arm-chair before the fire, sits in it, and sighs luxuriously.*) You know, this chair is comfortable—very comfortable. (*Without looking, he puts his hand on table and feels about it.*) Now, where is my pipe?

(POPPLY, coming to the top of the table, picks it up where he has thrown it aside and gives it to him.)

POPPLY (*between the top of the table and the arm-chair*). Here it is, Ambrose.

AMBROSE. Thank you, Poppy. (*He is still feeling about over the table with his hand without troubling to look.*) And the tobacco?

POPPLY. Here!

AMBROSE. Good. It's a great comfort to have the things one wants when one wants them.

(*He fills his pipe, settling himself the more comfortably as he does so.*)

POPPLY lights a match and hands it to him.)

POPPLY. Match? (*Still in the same position.*)

AMBROSE (*taking it from her*). Thanks. (*He lights his pipe. A sudden thought strikes him and he looks up at her quickly. There is a slight annoyance in his voice when he speaks.*) Why didn't you cry. (*Puffs*)—when I told you—(*Puffs*)—I was going away, Poppy?

(POPPLY turns away round the top of the table to its R. side.)

POPPY (*resting her knee on the stool R. of table*). I thought it was going to make you happy—and you don't want me to cry because you are going to be happy, do you?

AMBROSE (*the match has burnt out, and he wants to put it down*). Ash-tray—ash-tray!

(POPPY *hurriedly pushes the ash-tray across to him*.)

Of course I don't want you to cry . . . only . . . well, I thought you would miss me.

POPPY. Oh, I shall! (*She turns away a little up c.*) Oh, I shall! But you won't miss Aunt Agatha and me, will you?

AMBROSE. Miss you? I will miss you both confoundedly . . . I know it.

POPPY (*half turned from AMBROSE*). Then why do you go?

AMBROSE. I must, Poppy. All my life I've lived in a backwater. Romance has passed me by. I've only read of it in books. I've never even felt the need of it until last Tuesday week. But now I realize that it's the one thing worth living for. That searching for it is the only way to spend your time. Of course you can't understand all this.

POPPY. Oh yes, I can. (*She moves to the settee and sits facing down R.*)

AMBROSE. Really?

POPPY. But I don't see what makes you think it is so far away.

AMBROSE (*so intent on his idea that he does not heed her words*). As Jason said to me, you are not selling this house for money—you are trading it for the lure of the open road—the gipsy quarter of Seville, a moonlight night in Tangier, the mysterious East—Adventure—Romance!

POPPY. I should think Mr. Jason could sell anything.

AMBROSE (*romantically*). I crave adventure, Poppy . . . I should like to match my wits against an arch-villain . . . and then—love at first sight. . . . I want to rescue a beautiful young woman—from some terrible danger—preferably a foreign Princess. (*He settles himself even more comfortably in his chair*.) Her gratitude would be most affecting.

POPPY (*tremulously*). Do you mean you—you are going to be married?

AMBROSE (*rather appalled at the prospect*). Well—er—— Well, I haven't planned quite as far ahead as that.

POPPY. Ambrose, if you rescue a foreign Princess, you will *have* to marry her.

AMBROSE (*with complete seriousness*). I suppose I shall—— It is the respectable thing to do—yes. (*With a slight shade of regret*.)—But, you know, somehow I never thought of marriage at all.

POPPY (*with jealous curiosity*). Not even when you took the curate's sister to the Bazaar?

AMBROSE. That was a duty. And when duty begins, romance ends.

POPPY (*dreamily*). Love at first sight. I wonder if there really is such a thing.

AMBROSE. Don't you believe in it?

POPPY. Well, I—I have never experienced it.

AMBROSE. Neither have I. But Jason says it has happened to him over and over again.

POPPY (*enviously*). He must be a remarkable man!

AMBROSE (*proud of his friend*). Yes! He is!

POPPY. Did he tell you what it was like?

AMBROSE. In detail. He says it is a most peculiar sensation.

POPPY. Is it?

AMBROSE. Yes. Overpowering but not painful. (*He rises, standing with his back to the fire.*) To illustrate . . . a strange woman enters this room . . . I am here alone.

POPPY (*rising and getting up c. a little. With keenest interest*). Yes.

AMBROSE (*leaving the fireplace and talking as he moves in front to R. He sees all he describes and acts it with appropriate gesture*). We exchange greetings, and for a time discuss the most trivial subjects. Then something—a careless shrug of her shoulders, the quick bird-like turn of her head, a graceful gesture of her hand—breaks in on one's consciousness with a vague familiarity (*he has worked across to below the settee. He now turns up R.C. and comes to POPPY on her R.*)—the consciousness becomes a conviction—we have met before.

POPPY. But if you have met before, it isn't love at first sight, is it?

AMBROSE (*rather impatiently*). Not in this life, child—no. *Æons* and *æons* ago. (*Quoting rather sentimentally.*)

“I was a King in Babylon,
And you were a Christian slave.”

(*Striking a pose.*)

(*POPPY takes all this very seriously.*)

This knowledge thrills you! Then follows a moment of intense excitement which communicates itself to every nerve . . . your hands touch . . . your eyes meet . . . something electric—a flash—passes between you.

POPPY (*intensely interested*). Does it?

AMBROSE. Yes . . . er . . . so Jason says.

POPPY (*with a longing sigh and a slight movement to her L.*). Oh, it must be very interesting.

AMBROSE. Yes. Don't you see, now, Poppy, I must sell this place?

POPPY. But do you know where to go to find all this?

AMBROSE. You can always find it—everywhere—except at home
You see——

(*He pauses as LUSH enters L. with tray on which are whisky, siphon,
four glasses and candlestick and matches.*)

Well, Lush, what is it?

LUSH (*at the door*). It's ten o'clock, sir.

AMBROSE. Well?

LUSH (*shocked*). Shan't I lock up as usual, sir?

AMBROSE (*with a hopeless shrug*). Of course.

(*LUSH crosses R. to revolving bookcase and puts tray on top of it and
then picks up candlestick.*)

Never do anything out of the regular routine.

(*AMBROSE moves to the settee, picks up "Country Life" and stands
reading it.*)

POPPY. If it is ten o'clock, I must go to bed. Yes! I must go
to bed. Aunt Agatha won't know what has become of me. (*She
crosses R. to AMBROSE. Looking at him tenderly.*) Good . . . good
night, Ambrose.

AMBROSE (*very casually. Without turning to her or taking his
attention off the paper*). Good night, Poppy.

POPPY. I simply must go to bed. (*She makes a movement as if
she is about to speak to AMBROSE, then becomes aware of LUSH's
presence and stops abruptly. Moves up towards door L.*) Good
night, Lush.

LUSH. Good night, miss.

(*She turns at the door, looks again at AMBROSE, who pays no heed to
her, and then goes out, rather sadly, L.*)

AMBROSE (*rather absently*). Nice little girl.

LUSH. You will have your whisky and soda, as usual, sir?

(*LUSH comes down L.C., places the candlestick on the table. Then
takes the table with the coffee upon it and replaces it up L.*)

AMBROSE (*sourly*). As usual. (*Drops paper on settee.*)

LUSH. Very good, sir. Shall I lock up now, sir?

AMBROSE. Yes. You may as well.

(*LUSH goes to R. in front and locks windows, etc. AMBROSE goes up R.,
mixes whisky and soda, and takes it to his chair by the fire. Outside
the storm increases in violence.*)

It's a wild night, Lush.

(*AMBROSE crosses to L. and goes round the bottom of the table, puts
down his drink and arranges his arm-chair before sitting.*)

LUSH (*busy at the window*). Yes, sir, a tidy storm—a very tidy storm. (*He arranges the window curtains.*) Almost like some we had in the old days. Almost—not quite. (*Turning to the back of the settee.*) But there, nothing is quite up to what it was in the old days.

AMBROSE (*sitting in his chair, not particularly interested*). No, I suppose not.

(*From outside faintly comes the sound of men singing.*)

VOICES.

So blow the winds heigh-ho, a-rowing I will go,
I'll stay no more on England's shore, so let the music play.
I'll start by the morning train to cross the raging main,
I'm on the move to my own true love,
Ten thousand miles away.

AMBROSE. Who is that singing?

LUSH. I dare say it's the coastguards patrol, sir. Nowadays they patrol in groups, but when I was a lad——

AMBROSE (*bored*). It was different.

LUSH. It were, sir.

(*AMBROSE speaks before the singing is finished, so that it dies away at this point and LUSH comes to C.*)

What book will you take to your room, sir—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" or "Youatt on the Horse"?

AMBROSE (*taking a sip of his whisky*). Neither.

LUSH (*surprised*). Neither, sir?

AMBROSE. Get me "The Three Musketeers."

LUSH (*echoing blankly*). "The Three Musketeers"!

(*There comes a loud and violent knocking off. It startles both men. They listen silently.*)

AMBROSE. Who in the world can that be?

LUSH. I don't know, sir.

AMBROSE (*vexedly*). Most unusual for anyone to come at this hour. Most unusual—and annoying. One does not care to have one's regular habits interfered with. (*Meeting the unusual he has so longed for, he is vastly annoyed.*)

LUSH. No, sir.

(*The knocking is repeated with added violence.*)

AMBROSE. You may as well see who it is, Lush.

LUSH. Very good, sir.

(*He takes the candlestick from the table L.C. to the table he has moved up L., picks up tray with coffee and goes off L.*)

AMBROSE. Most unusual and inconsiderate and most inconvenient.

(*After a slight pause, LUSH re-enters. He appears rather flustered.*)

LUSH. Beg pardon, sir. (*Coming R. of table L.C.*)

AMBROSE. Well, what is it?

LUSH. A lady, sir.

AMBROSE (*taken aback*). A lady!

LUSH. A young lady. She wishes to see you, sir.

AMBROSE. To see me?

LUSH. Yes, sir.

AMBROSE. What is her name?

LUSH. She wouldn't give it.

AMBROSE. She wouldn't give her name?

LUSH. No, sir!

AMBROSE (*with great disapproval*). Most unconventional! Didn't you tell her that I never see anyone at this time of night?

LUSH. Yes, sir, but she—er—she seems to be a foreigner.

AMBROSE (*with vast distaste*). Of course. I might have known it. Interrupting one at this time of night. I don't care for foreign ladies.

LUSH. She wouldn't take no for an answer, sir. Said she must see you—it was most important.

AMBROSE (*grumpily*). I can imagine nothing of so little importance as meeting a perfect stranger. Say to her—— (*He pauses as a thought occurs to him. An eager expression steals across his face.*) By the way, though, Lush, does the lady appear . . . well . . . prosperous?

LUSH. She's dressed very 'andsome, sir.

AMBROSE (*with a broad smile*). That's it! She's come to buy the place. That's the way foreigners do things. (*He rubs his hands together enthusiastically.*)

LUSH (*staring at him*). Beg pardon, sir?

AMBROSE (*rises from arm-chair, sharply to him*). What ails you, man, standing there? Don't you know better than to keep a lady waiting like this? Show her in—at once.

LUSH (*utterly nonplussed*). Yes, sir. (*He opens the door and goes out leaving it open, and his voice is heard off.*) Mr. Applejohn will be very glad to see you, madam. Will you come in?

LUSH enters and holds door open, ANNA VALESKA enters, a strikingly beautiful woman; she wears an evening gown over which is thrown a magnificent cloak. She carries a handsome jewel-case. Her bearing is quick, impulsive, fiery. She speaks with a strong French accent. As she enters, she goes quickly to C., her hand outstretched to AMBROSE impulsively. Her manner is nervous, mysterious, and excited. LUSH withdraws.)

ANNA (R.C.). Oh, Monsieur, I beg a thousand—ten thousand pardons for this so sudden intrusion.

(AMBROSE bows and advancing meets ANNA R.C. and takes her hand.

ANNA *draws back up C. as AMBROSE releases her hand and furtively glances towards the door L. The mystery of her manner increasing.*)

Out there—a man he is searching for me.

AMBROSE. Oh, then you didn't come to buy the place? (*He is greatly disappointed.*)

ANNA (*grandly*). Monsieur, I am Anna Valeska, the Russian dancer?

AMBROSE (*blankly*). Indeed. (*He looks at his watch, fidgeting about.*)

ANNA (*rather disappointed at the calmness with which he receives her announcement, she moves to the settee and sits*). You have heard of me . . . yes?

AMBROSE (*coming C. and obviously lying*). Oh yes. Frequently . . . frequently.

ANNA (*complacently*). Why not? Am I not famous all over the world?

AMBROSE (*very uneasy*). Yes . . . yes . . . who is it you are expecting?

ANNA. Borolsky, the Bolshevik spy. The most dangerous man in the world.

AMBROSE (*with intense distaste*). Borolsky! (*At L. of settee.*)

ANNA. When the Revolution come, I am in Moscow. The Bolsheviks keep me there a prisoner to dance for them. (*With bitter hatred.*) Canaille! (*Softening towards them at the thought.*) But they like my dancing—oh, so much!

AMBROSE (*nervous*). I am sure they did.

ANNA. Then there come the time when they think I shall be more valuable to them as something else—they want me to become their spy.

AMBROSE (*thrilled at the story in spite of his apprehension*). Well, upon my word!

ANNA. But I say—NO!

AMBROSE. Good!

ANNA. Then one day Lenin—himself—he send for me. The soldiers take me to him. He show me jewels—diamonds—rubies—sapphires—pearls! He says, "Spy for me, and they are yours."

AMBROSE. The scoundrel! (*Gradually her story is making him forget their imminent danger.*)

ANNA. Ah! But I have recognize them—those jewels! They belong to the Grand Duchess Sonia! She who was my patron—my friend! She who do all for me. I know she is living here in England—in poverty. If I can take them to her it will mean her happiness.

AMBROSE. A noble thought!

ANNA. The thought he come to me. I see the way. I will pretend to consent. Escape from Russia and bring the jewels to her, my friend—so I say to Lenin—yes—

AMBROSE. Splendid !

ANNA. He give them to me and I go. I am only across the border when they realize I have played them the trick. They send Borolsky after me—Ivan Borolsky—he who was spy for the Czar—the greatest spy in all the world, cruel, ruthless, terrible. (*Rises.*)

AMBROSE (*extremely uneasy at the description of BOROLSKY, has backed up to the door L.; he comes nervously down again as he speaks.*) And that is the man you are expecting here ?

ANNA (*up c.*). Across Europe he pursue me, but I elude him. (*Takes AMBROSE's arm.*) Now, Monsieur, when he come, you will not give me up to him ? (*Leading AMBROSE a little to L.C.*)

AMBROSE. But he may not come.

ANNA (*R. of c.*). You do not know Borolsky—he will come.

(*A loud knock on the door. This knock is repeated ad lib. three times until "Where shall I hide ?"*)

He is here !

AMBROSE. Good Lord ! (*He staggers back.*)

ANNA. What shall I do ?

AMBROSE. Go in there. (*Points to door up R., and falls on to stool L.C. and then on to floor ; he tries to get up and his knees give way.*)

ANNA. You will save me.

(*AMBROSE kneels.*)

AMBROSE (*without enthusiasm*). I will do what I can.

ANNA. You are a brave man.

(*Knocking outside is repeated ; it affects AMBROSE greatly, he scrambles to his feet.*)

(*Taking up jewel-case off settee.*) Where shall I hide ?

AMBROSE. Go in there. (*He crosses to R. above her and opens door for her. She goes. At the threshold she turns.*)

ANNA. Promise you will not let him kill you.

AMBROSE (*weakly*). I promise.

ANNA. My hero !

(*She goes out door R., AMBROSE closes it and then crouches in terror behind the settee. LUSH enters L.*)

LUSH. Beg pardon, sir.

AMBROSE (*sharply ; only his head showing above the back of the settee*). I am not at home.

LUSH. But, sir—— (*Advancing a little.*)

AMBROSE (*raising his voice*). Can't you hear ? I am not at home to anybody.

LUSH. There's a gentleman and lady at the door.

AMBROSE (*with a ray of hope*). A gentleman and lady—are they foreigners?

LUSH. No, sir—they are English.

(AMBROSE *heaves a deep sigh of relief, gets up and sits on the lower arm of the settee.*)

Mr. and Mrs. Pengard is the name, sir. Their motor broke down just outside, sir. They ask if they may take shelter here from the storm, while the chauffeur is repairing it.

AMBROSE (*rises*). Of course. Put them in the drawing-room and see that they have everything they want.

LUSH. Beg pardon, sir. But they seem very keen on the house.

AMBROSE (*suddenly greatly interested*). You mean, you think they might—

LUSH. I couldn't say for sure, sir.

AMBROSE. Well, you had better show them in here.

LUSH. Yes, sir. (*He goes out.*)

(AMBROSE *heaves a deep sigh of relief. Then crosses to the R. of table L.C., and finishes his drink, turns on his R. and puts glass on revolving bookcase up R. LUSH re-enters and announces—*)

(*Standing above the door.*) Mr. and Mrs. Pengard.

(MRS. PENGARD *enters L., a tall, handsome, domineering woman with a gushing manner.*)

MRS. PENGARD (*coming to C. up stage. Effusively*). My dear sir, this is really too kind of you—most hospitable!

AMBROSE (*advancing to her R.*). Delighted, I'm sure! Won't you sit down? (*He waves towards the settee.*)

MRS. PENGARD. Thank you so much. We have had a motor accident and I feel rather faint—

(*In the attempt to cross to the settee she sways against AMBROSE; he helps her to settee, passing her across in front of him.*)

(*Sitting on settee R.C.*) I am better now.

(PENGARD *enters L. door. He is a little sallow-faced man, dressed in a rough suit of worn, dark clothes, over which he wears an old cloth motor-coat with a large roll collar, the coat being a trifle superior to the rest of his costume. He wears an Indian turban, and this, when his overcoat is buttoned, gives him something of, if not quite all the character he professes. There is a great air of mystery about him. The audience sees at once—although AMBROSE does not—that there is something peculiar about the Pengards, and that the excuse for entering is clearly a subterfuge. AMBROSE, on seeing PENGARD, is a trifle startled. PENGARD stands up L. LUSH goes out and closes the door.*)

AMBROSE. He's a good deal cut about the head: you have bandaged him, I see?

(The turban PENGARD wears should excuse this error.)

MRS. PENGARD *(pompously)*. His professional headgear. My husband.

AMBROSE *(going towards PENGARD hospitably)*. Mr. Pengard.

PENGARD *(aloof)*. Zoroaster—the second.

AMBROSE. Eh?

(AMBROSE C. PENGARD L.C. up stage.)

MRS. PENGARD. The famous psychic—the Oriental seer.

AMBROSE. Eh——?

MRS. PENGARD. Have you lost your watch?

AMBROSE *(C., very puzzled—feeling for his watch)*. No! not yet.

MRS. PENGARD. Zoroaster will find it.

AMBROSE *(looking at PENGARD and then at MRS. PENGARD, and then, as if at a loss, moving down to L.C.)*. Will he?

MRS. PENGARD. Do you wish news of missing relatives?

(The moment AMBROSE moves, PENGARD steps backwards and runs his hand over the panels of the bookcase C., keeping a quick eye on AMBROSE.)

AMBROSE *(his back still to PENGARD)*. I haven't missed any much.

MRS. PENGARD. Zoroaster will furnish it.

AMBROSE. Oh, will he?

MRS. PENGARD. Your past and your future are an open book to him.

AMBROSE. How inconvenient! *(Turns, smilingly looking towards PENGARD.)*

MRS. PENGARD. He will interpret your dreams for you.

PENGARD *(finding AMBROSE looking at him—comes down a little C.)*. And you must dream here in this old house. The influence of the past is all about it. *(He turns round, facing up stage slowly, waves his arms—goes up and continues waving his arms, his fingers running over the woodwork of the bookcase.)* I feel it, I feel it.

AMBROSE. You don't say so?

PENGARD *(still moving his hands about the bookcase)*. If you wish to know the secrets of the past—dream in this room and all shall be revealed.

AMBROSE. Really?

PENGARD *(working his way across back to R.)*. Even now I can feel them all about me—ghosts from the distant centuries.

AMBROSE. Can you?

PENGARD. Yes. The ghosts—the spirits. *(He sees whisky and soda on the revolving bookcase.)* It overcomes me—I am faint.

(He staggers back a little from the table and leans against the bookcase, facing audience, but never taking his eyes from the whisky.)

AMBROSE. No! don't faint, whatever you do. (*Moving quickly to the revolving bookcase.*) Perhaps a whisky and soda. It's pre-war.

PENGARD (*edging a little L. along the bookcase whilst AMBROSE is mixing the whisky, passes the fingers of one hand across his mouth in anticipation of the drink and then continues to feel the woodwork behind and below him.* AMBROSE mixes him whisky and soda, turns and hands it to him). Thank you.

(MRS. PENGARD rises and crosses to L. AMBROSE comes to the front of the settee. PENGARD makes a sign to MRS. PENGARD that he has found the panel.)

MRS. PENGARD (*standing, facing up, below stool by table L.C.*). My husband is not strong and to-day he has overtaxed himself.

AMBROSE. Indeed. I'm sorry for that. (*Coming c.*)

MRS. PENGARD. He gave a public test in Clovelly—

AMBROSE. A public test?

MRS. PENGARD. A man had lost his motor-car—a Ford—it was most difficult to locate.

AMBROSE. I should say almost impossible.

MRS. PENGARD (*with triumph*). Zoroaster succeeded!

AMBROSE. Did he? Where was it?

MRS. PENGARD. In the garage.

AMBROSE. Almost incredible!

(PENGARD knocks on panel.)

Come in.

PENGARD (*having finished his drink, puts the glass on the revolving bookcase and comes above the settee*). But this room—it overwhelms me. If I could dream here— (*Waving his arms at the back of the settee.*)

MRS. PENGARD. The results would be most interesting.

AMBROSE. Then why not buy the place?

MRS. PENGARD. It is for sale?

AMBROSE. I have just put it up for sale.

MRS. PENGARD. How exciting! But one hasn't an idea of what it looks like in the daytime—

PENGARD. No?

MRS. PENGARD. Have you a photograph?

AMBROSE. Yes. In another room. I'll fetch you one. (*He turns in the direction of the door L.*)

(*The answer is the one she hoped for. It is evidently with the intention of getting him out of the room that she speaks.*)

MRS. PENGARD (*moving to C. and turning to AMBROSE, who pauses up L.C., then continuing her movement to the settee, on which she sits up-stage end*). I wonder if I might see it?

AMBROSE. Of course. I'll bring it to you at once. It's in a room close by.

(PENGARD comes round the lower end of the settee and sits beside MRS. PENGARD.)

MRS. PENGARD. You are kind.

AMBROSE. Not at all. (*He goes out L.*)

(*The instant the door closes behind him MR. and MRS. PENGARD quickly exchange looks—their manner instantly altering.*)

MRS. PENGARD (*speaking in a hurried whisper*). Quick! Unfasten that window.

PENGARD (*turning round lower end of settee to the window behind him R.*). Yes——

(*As PENGARD is manipulating the window MRS. PENGARD rises and crosses to the door L. and stands listening.*)

Is it all right?

MRS. PENGARD. Yes, You are sure you found the right place in the panel?

PENGARD. Yes, of course.

MRS. PENGARD. Good. Have you fixed the window?

PENGARD. Yes.

MRS. PENGARD. Then flash your torch so Smith will know it is all right.

(PENGARD takes out an electric torch and flashes it twice into the night.)

Quick—he is coming.

(*They both hurriedly resume the positions on the settee they were in when AMBROSE left. He comes in to C., carrying a photograph in his hand.*)

PENGARD (*pretending to speak Hindustani*). Matta, Hulla, Bakka.

AMBROSE. Will you have another? Here it is, Mrs. Pengard. (*Crossing to settee at its upper end.*)

MRS. PENGARD (*looking at photograph*). Oh, but it is delightful—charming!

(LUSH enters L.)

LUSH. The chauffeur has reported that the car is quite ready, sir.

(LUSH goes out L.)

MRS. PENGARD (*rising with obvious relief*). Then we must go.

AMBROSE (*disappointed at lack of result and moving to C.*). So soon? We haven't come to terms, you know.

PENGARD (*rising*). No, not yet.

AMBROSE. I can't promise to keep it for you. Houses are very scarce. It may be snapped up at any minute, you know.

MRS. PENGARD (*crossing AMBROSE to up L.C.*). But you must let us come and see it in the daytime.

AMBROSE (*delighted*). Of course—delighted. But I advise you to come soon.

MRS. PENGARD (*turning*). We will.

PENGARD (*standing in front of settee where he has risen*). Very soon, I hope.

MRS. PENGARD. Thank you so much, and good night.

AMBROSE (C.). Good night.

(*She goes out L.*)

PENGARD. Time passes with a fleeting foot. (*He crosses AMBROSE with his arms outspread and an air of great mysticism.*) There is no meeting—there is no parting. (*Turns at door.*) No! Parting—

(AMBROSE stares at him nonplussed. PENGARD goes out L.)

AMBROSE (*shaking his head*). He won't buy the place. A very curious couple. (*He stands lost in thought, then suddenly remembers and crosses R. to the room where ANNA is and opens the door.*) Come in, dear lady. I am quite alone. (*He moves to C.*)

(ANNA enters and advances to his R. dramatically. She carries her handkerchief in her hand.)

ANNA. Has he gone? Oh, my friend! You have sent him away. You have triumph over Borolsky.

AMBROSE. It wasn't Borolsky.

ANNA. No?

AMBROSE. No. It was a most curious couple. It appears that their motor broke down—Mr. and Mrs. Pengard—

(*As he mentions the name PENGARD, ANNA starts visibly and turns to the front of the settee.*)

Why . . . what?—you know them?

ANNA (*excitedly*). Pengard? He is a little man with a yellow face and a turban on his head—and his wife, a large statue woman—eh?

AMBROSE. Yes. Do you know them?

(*For a space she is taken aback. It is clear to the audience that she does not wish to tell him the truth, and she cannot think quite how to answer him. Then an idea dawns on her. She turns to AMBROSE and as she does so drops her handkerchief on to the settee.*)

ANNA. They are his spies . . . Borolsky's.

AMBROSE. No, no. You are wrong there.

(ANNA moves across to the L.)

I am not a bad judge of human nature, and I must say I have never

met a more honest couple in my life—curious, but honest—and I should say perfectly respectable.

(It is clear that, for some reason, ANNA is thoroughly disgruntled at the visit of the PENGARDS though she makes no further protest.)

They are talking of buying this place and——

ANNA. Oh! No! No!

AMBROSE *(he notices her aloof attitude)*. Why, what is it?

ANNA *(coming R.C.)*. Do you know, my friend, I am disappointed that it was not Borolsky.

AMBROSE *(taken aback)*. You are?

ANNA. I thought at last Borolsky had met his match and I wanted to see him—beaten.

AMBROSE *(complacently)*. Do you know I have always wished I might match wits with an arch-villain. I have always believed that right would triumph in the end. But I suppose there's no chance of him coming now?

(LUSH enters L.)

LUSH. Mr. Borolsky.

(AMBROSE steps back and collapses on the settee, wilting.)

ANNA *(C.)*. Oh, my friend, your chance has come—at last.

AMBROSE. Yes.

ANNA. I will go back in there. *(Going to door R.)*

AMBROSE. Yes.

ANNA. *Bonne chance, Monsieur!*

AMBROSE *(weakly)*. Yes——

(She goes out R. AMBROSE quickly gets up and, going to the revolving bookcase R., mixes himself another drink and gulps it down.)

LUSH *(who has been waiting at the door)*. Shall I show Mr. Borolsky in, sir?

AMBROSE *(after a long pause)*. Yes, I suppose you must.

(LUSH goes out L. AMBROSE crosses down to R. of table L.C., pulls out drawer of table, and taking out revolver, hides it under newspaper on table. Then he stands waiting, decidedly ill at ease.)

(LUSH enters L.)

LUSH *(announcing)*. Mr. Ivan Borolsky.

(IVAN BOROLSKY enters L., a tall forceful man—he radiates power—with pale stern face and very dark hair. He is perfectly dressed—there is even a touch of foppishness about his attire—and his manner is that of extreme polish. LUSH withdraws as he enters.)

BOROLSKY *(coming C., bowing low, he speaks without accent)*. Mr. Applejohn?

(AMBROSE bows in return.)

AMBROSE (*very ill at ease*). How—how do you do? (*Standing with his back to the fire he bows again.*)

BOROLSKY. Thank you. (*Pause.*) I am quite well. (*Bows again.*)

(AMBROSE also bows again and appears very relieved.)

AMBROSE (*more ill at ease*). Splendid . . . excellent, that's good news.

(*A pause.*)

Won't you sit down?

BOROLSKY (*bowing once more—AMBROSE once more reciprocates*). Thank you. (*Pause.*) I will.

(*As he turns to the settee to sit his eye falls on the handkerchief which ANNA has let fall. Looks at it, then sits on settee, gets himself comfortable before he speaks. His deliberation gets on AMBROSE'S nerves greatly, but he does his utmost to duplicate the other's suave manner.*)

I must offer my apologies for calling upon you at this late hour.

AMBROSE. Please don't. (*Coming c.*) Will you have a drink?—a whisky and soda?

BOROLSKY. Thanks——

(AMBROSE turns to go up to get whisky.)

—no.

(*At the "No" AMBROSE nearly loses his balance through nervousness.*)

AMBROSE (*recovering himself a little up R.C.*). A cigarette?

BOROLSKY. Thanks——

(*Pause—AMBROSE does not know what to do and nearly loses balance again.*)

—yes.

(AMBROSE crosses to the table L.C., gets cigarette box and crosses to BOROLSKY. BOROLSKY takes a cigarette, and AMBROSE also takes one as he returns to table L.C. to put down the box.)

AMBROSE (*speaking as he moves L.*). Match?

BOROLSKY (*rising*). I have one. (*Taking box from tail-pocket.*)

AMBROSE. Good—(*putting back cigarette box on table L.C., feeling in pockets*)—I am afraid I haven't.

BOROLSKY (*after lighting his own cigarette*). Pray allow me. (*Holds match for AMBROSE, who goes to him.*)

AMBROSE (*lighting his cigarette*). A thousand—ten thousand thanks. (*Takes match.*)

(*As AMBROSE blows the match out, he goes to put it on the table L.C.*)

BOROLSKY *turns and looks at the handkerchief. Picks it up and unobserved examines it, puts it behind his back and turns to AMBROSE.*)

BOROLSKY. Mr. Applejohn. (*Slight pause.*) Are you a friend of justice?

AMBROSE (*R. of table L.C., rather nonplussed*). Well, I am not a policeman.

BOROLSKY (*losing the suavity of his manner*). The police, tch! Of what use are the police?

(BOROLSKY *sits again on the settee R.C.*)

AMBROSE (*from the bottom of his heart*). Well, I have known the time when one of them would be a very welcome sight—very welcome sight indeed.

BOROLSKY. It is because the police are useless that I am here to-night.

AMBROSE (*sits on stool R. of table L.C.*). Yes! I can quite believe that.

BOROLSKY (*sternly*). Mr. Applejohn, I am searching for a lady who has tricked and betrayed me—and my friends—and when anyone trifles with me I hunt them down and make them suffer—remember that!

AMBROSE (*blinking his eyes*). But what has that got to do with me?

BOROLSKY (*recovering himself—very suave*). Nothing—of course. Except that it will explain my presence here under these unusual circumstances. The woman I seek is somewhere in this neighbourhood. For the moment she has eluded me, but I mean to find her.

AMBROSE (*blinking*). I see.

BOROLSKY. Mr. Applejohn, has a strange lady sought shelter here to-night?

AMBROSE. A strange lady, my dear sir? I don't keep an hotel.

BOROLSKY. You will pardon me for pointing out that that is not an answer to my question.

AMBROSE. Don't you think that in using that tone you are perhaps exceeding—

BOROLSKY (*sharply*). No. The woman is no better than a criminal flying from justice. I have every right to use all means to find her, and I shall. (*Pause.*) Is she here?

AMBROSE. No.

BOROLSKY. Are you sure? (*Leaning forward.*)

AMBROSE (*rising to his L.*). Of course I am sure. You think I shouldn't notice a strange woman about the house, do you? I'd make a point of noticing her.

(AMBROSE *turns away to the fire as if the matter were settled. With elaborate carelessness BOROLSKY rises.*)

BOROLSKY. Then I can only make my excuses, and bid you good night.

AMBROSE (*with keen relief*). You are not going—so soon?

BOROLSKY. I am afraid I must. (*Crossing to R. of table L.C.*)

(AMBROSE *rings the bell by the side of the fire.*)

Mr. Applejohn, you have lied to me.

AMBROSE (*moving to L. of table*). Sir——

BOROLSKY (*producing ANNA'S handkerchief*). This handkerchief. It is the property of the lady I am seeking. She *is* here. The woman I seek is here. I mean to have her!

(BOROLSKY *turns as if to go up, towards door R.*)

AMBROSE. My dear sir——

BOROLSKY (*turning back to AMBROSE*). Take care how you trifle with me. I told you what happened to those who did. There has been enough talk already.

AMBROSE. What are you going to do?

BOROLSKY. Search this house until I find her!

(*He turns towards door of room where ANNA is hiding. AMBROSE picks up revolver from under paper and levels it at BOROLSKY.*)

AMBROSE. Pardon me, but you are not. You are going now.

(BOROLSKY *throws up his hands. For a space they stand facing each other.*)

BOROLSKY. Very well, I will go. (*Bows.*)

(AMBROSE *bows in return.*)

(*Coming a step C., suddenly becoming very suave.*) Do you mind if I have another cigarette?

AMBROSE. Not at all if you will go as soon as you have got it.

(BOROLSKY *walks up to the table with the revolver levelled at him all the time. He takes cigarette from box, lights match and drops it suddenly on AMBROSE'S hand. AMBROSE lets the pistol fall with a cry. BOROLSKY snatches up the revolver and levels it at AMBROSE.*)

Oh! Oh! You've burnt my hand!

BOROLSKY. Now will you tell me where she is? I warn you, I shall use this if you don't.

AMBROSE. It isn't loaded.

(BOROLSKY *does not move, but drops pistol down on table.*)

My motto is safety first.

(LUSH *enters L. BOROLSKY steps back.*)

LUSH (*at the door*). You rang, sir?

AMBROSE. Yes, Lush; show Mr. Borolsky the door, and then you may lock up and go to bed.

LUSH. Thank you, sir.

(*He stands holding door open for BOROLSKY. The latter stands eyeing AMBROSE sourly. After a pause, he suddenly becomes very suave. Bows. AMBROSE bows.*)

BOROLSKY. Thank you so much, and good night. We shall see each other soon again.

(AMBROSE laughs.)

Indeed, I will make a point of it.

(*He goes up L.C., stops, bows; AMBROSE bows in return. BOROLSKY turns and goes out L., LUSH follows, closing the door behind him. AMBROSE picks up the pistol, and empties it of cartridges, into drawer of table. He heaves a great sigh of relief.*)

AMBROSE (*moving across the lower end of the table to C., looking at door L.*). Unpleasant fellow—most unpleasant.

(*ANNA opens door R. and peers in. Seeing him alone, she comes in. She is carrying her jewel-case, which she places on the revolving book-case R.*)

ANNA (*standing R.C.*). My friend, you are safe—quite safe! You are still alive!

AMBROSE (*still under the strain*). Just alive!

(AMBROSE comes to her R.)

ANNA. And you have sent Borolsky away!

AMBROSE. Nonsense!

ANNA. You have saved me! How can I thank you! How can I ever thank you!

AMBROSE. Nonsense!

(*ANNA wrings his hand and kisses it. He struggles to get free at sight of POPPY, who at this moment enters door L. and comes to up L.C.*)

POPPY. Ambrose, I heard so much noise downstairs, I——

(*POPPY sees ANNA still kissing AMBROSE's hand—and she stops short.*)

Goodness!

AMBROSE (*releasing his hand quickly and turning to POPPY*). It is all right, Poppy.

POPPY (*coming down a little to R. of table L.C.*). I didn't know you had a visitor.

AMBROSE (*introducing*). This is Madame Anna Valeska—my cousin Miss Poppy Faire.

POPPY. Good evening.

ANNA (*crossing AMBROSE L. to POPPY and speaking to her impetuously*). Oh, you are a lucky girl to have a cousin so brave. He have saved my life at the risk of his own.

(AMBROSE goes down a little R.C.)

POPPY (*recalling her conversation with him*). Oh!

ANNA. He match wits with a villain and beat him. He is wonderful.

AMBROSE (*basking in the flattery*). Oh, nonsense.

ANNA. He is—he is! Oh, I cannot speak now—I am overcome. (*Turns up stage C. POPPY looks after her.*)

POPPY (*goes R. to AMBROSE wistfully*). What's it all about?

AMBROSE. Oh, nothing much. A strange man annoyed Madame Valeska—followed her here—and I got rid of him.

ANNA (*turns and comes down L. of POPPY*). My friend, I cannot longer inflict myself upon you.

POPPY. Then you are going?

ANNA. I must.

AMBROSE (*crossing POPPY to ANNA'S R.*). Nothing of the sort. It isn't safe outside. You have nowhere to go.

ANNA. No.

AMBROSE. Then you must stay here.

ANNA. If it will not too much trouble you I should be glad.

AMBROSE. Trouble? It will be a pleasure. Poppy, will you see that a room is made ready for Madame Valeska?

(POPPY goes up behind AMBROSE and ANNA to door L.)

It's common humanity.

POPPY. Of course—yes—— (*She goes to door L. Then she turns and looks back at them. They are looking at each other and do not heed her. She goes out L.*)

ANNA (C.). Ah—you are kind.

AMBROSE (R.C.). Kind!—bosh!

ANNA (*close to AMBROSE*). And for me—a stranger. And yet, somehow, I do not feel that we are quite strangers.

AMBROSE. No?

ANNA (*going down to L.C.*). No, I have an impression—I cannot quite describe him—but I feel that somewhere we have met before.

AMBROSE (*the significance of her words thrills him*). Good Lord!

ANNA (*rather hurt*). You laugh?

AMBROSE (C.). No—no. I don't laugh. I, too, have the same feeling.

ANNA. You?

AMBROSE. Yes.

ANNA. It is so vague—and yet so real.

AMBROSE. I know.

ANNA. And yet I am sure we have never met before. (*Shaking head.*)

AMBROSE. Not in this world perhaps— (*Drawing closer.*)

ANNA. You mean centuries ago?

AMBROSE. Perhaps, who knows?

ANNA. Ah! that is true—who knows?

(*They sigh deeply. Then there is silence. ANNA is half turned from AMBROSE. He keeps eyeing her hand. Presently he bends over and makes an action as though to grasp it—he just touches it when she turns and looks at him—their eyes meet.*)

AMBROSE (*moving down R.*). The flash! Now I know what Jason meant! (*For a space he stands fidgeting, evidently trying to raise courage.*) Madame Valeska. (*He goes back to her. She turns to him. With a burst of courage he asks:*) May I—may I call you Anna?

ANNA (*turning to him eagerly*). Oh, will you?

AMBROSE. Certainly I will. Anna, I would like to . . . to . . . (*as he hesitates he turns a little on his R.*) to ask you a question.

ANNA. What is it?

AMBROSE (*embarrassed*). Well, I . . . (*he takes a few paces up stage to the upper end of the settee and turns*) I hope you won't think me . . . impertinent.

ANNA (*sweeping across and seating herself at the upper end of the settee and gazing up into AMBROSE's face*). No.

AMBROSE. You are sure?

(*She nods.*)

Then . . . (*he takes a step down stage and seats himself down-stage end of settee*) then do you believe in love at first sight?

ANNA (*drawing close to him across the settee and looking up in his eyes*). My friend, there is no other kind.

(*The invitation in her attitude is clear enough, but he cannot find the courage to accept it, though he strives desperately.*)

AMBROSE. No, I suppose not.

ANNA (*leading him on*). If it came to me----

AMBROSE (*growing bolder*). Yes----

ANNA. If it came to me, I should forget all else----

AMBROSE. Would you?

ANNA. Yes, Monsieur, everything. My career—my husband.

AMBROSE (*astounded*). What, you are married, then? (*Rises and gets R.C.*)

ANNA. Oh, but yes, Monsieur.

AMBROSE. Married! How could you forget your husband?

ANNA. It is easy enough.

AMBROSE (*with a touch of his old priggish manner*). But . . . it's . . . it's . . . well, it isn't respectable.

ANNA. Respectable, bah! (*She rises.*) Respectability and love

—they have nothing in common. The respectable—they never know what love is. (*Steps to AMBROSE on his R.*)

(*They are standing very close together and her attitude is still one of invitation. He has been on the point of taking her in his arms, but her words are too great a shock. For a time he wavers, then he shakes his head mournfully.*)

AMBROSE. I have always been respectable. It's a family trait.

(*ANNA leans close up to him very lovingly. There is an awkward pause. At last he attempts to lighten it.*)

Very unpleasant the weather has been lately!

ANNA (*turning away from him with annoyance to R.*). Tahk!

(*A MAID enters and stands by door L. AMBROSE hails her entrance with a sigh of relief.*)

MAID. The room is quite ready for Madame.

ANNA. Thanks, I am tired. (*She turns up stage behind the settee and takes up her jewel-case from the bookcase R., moving at back to L.C. The MAID advances.*)

MAID (*taking jewel-case from ANNA and preceding her to door L.*). I will show you the way, Madame.

ANNA (*turning to AMBROSE above table L.C.—her manner is rather cold and very formal.*). Good night—and thank you, Monsieur Joseph!

(*She goes out L. MAID follows, closing door behind her. AMBROSE stands a bit dazed R.*)

AMBROSE (*after a pause repeats softly to himself*). Monsieur Joseph!

(*He gazes into space, repeating "Joseph," crosses to L., and switches off the lights by fire, turns to table and puts out the reading lamp, then crosses below table up C. to table at the back L. and lights his candle. He then crosses to R. and switches out the standard lamp, still saying "Joseph" to himself. He comes back to little table L., picks up candlestick, takes a book out of the bookcase, reads the title, "The Three Musketeers," puts the book down on the table, takes another book, looks at the title, "Youatt on the Horse." He hesitates between the two then decides on "Youatt on the Horse." He puts the book under his arm and exits L.*)

(*The stage is dark. A slight pause. Then the light of an electric torch appears outside window. The sound of the window being softly opened is heard, and then someone steals into the room. It is PENGARD. He flashes his torch about to see that the room is quite empty, then he turns to the window.*)

PENGARD (*whispering to someone off*). It's all right. Come in.

(Another figure steals into the room. It is MRS. PENGARD.)

Careful of that sofa. *(He puts his hand on the settee.)*

MRS. PENGARD. Yes. *(Passing across the lower end of the settee to R.C.)*

PENGARD. Listen by the door, and I'll have the panel open in a jiffy.

MRS. PENGARD. Right. Take care you make no noise.

(Going across to the door, MRS. PENGARD points her torch on the panel.)

PENGARD *(working up at the back of the settee to bookcase)*. Quite.

(MRS. PENGARD is at the door L., listening. PENGARD at the spot in panel where he knocked on it.)

Hear anything?

MRS. PENGARD. No.

PENGARD. Sure?

MRS. PENGARD. Hell! Of course I am sure. Get on with it.

PENGARD. It's a very ticklish business.

MRS. PENGARD. It's perfectly safe.

(All this scene is played with hushed, lowered voices. But their elaborate polish has entirely vanished.)

PENGARD. Damn!

MRS. PENGARD. What's the matter?

PENGARD. I can't slide the panel a bit. It's stuck fast.

MRS. PENGARD. Haven't you got your jemmy?

PENGARD. Yes. You know—I don't like this job at all.

MRS. PENGARD. Damn! You make me sick! You are going to get a fortune, man—and without risk.

PENGARD. I think it's moving now.

MRS. PENGARD. Good.

PENGARD. But very slowly. *(In trying to prise open the panel with jemmy he knocks against the little table up L. It falls with a crash—he drops the jemmy.)* G—ish!

MRS. PENGARD. You clumsy fool!

PENGARD. I didn't do it on purpose. I——

MRS. PENGARD. Hush!

PENGARD. What is it?

MRS. PENGARD. Someone is moving upstairs.

PENGARD. Let's get out. *(Crosses to below settee R.)*

MRS. PENGARD. Wait.

PENGARD *(stopping)*. It isn't a time to wait.

MRS. PENGARD. Get out. They are coming down. *(Following towards window R.)*

PENGARD *(moves)*. Yes——

MRS. PENGARD *(pushing PENGARD on one side up stage)*. Get out of my way—I'll go first.

PENGARD. But——

MRS. PENGARD. Sssh! Hold your tongue.

(She goes through window R. He follows her.)

(An instant's pause. Door L. opens and AMBROSE appears. POPPY follows him. AMBROSE carries candle.)

AMBROSE *(yawning and holding the candle above him up L.C.)*. You see, Poppy. I knew you were wrong. There are no burglars here.

POPPY *(behind AMBROSE)*. I am sure I heard something.

AMBROSE. I never heard a sound.

POPPY *(suddenly pointing over his shoulder)*. Look, Ambrose—the window is open!

AMBROSE. By Jove, you're right! *(He advances a few steps.)* Wide open too, Poppy. Turn up the lights, Poppy! You know what this is—burglars. *(He comes down R. of table and crosses to the fire, picking up the poker.)* Yes! Burglars. *(He advances to foot of table.)*

POPPY *(coming down L. between arm-chair and table and switching on lights by the fire)*. Yes.

(AMBROSE moves over to R. and switches on the standard lamp. POPPY comes below the table L.C., turns up L.C. and sees the jemmy and the overturned table.)

(Putting the table on its legs and taking up the jemmy.) Oh, Ambrose! Look! And they have dropped this! That's what I heard—what is it?

AMBROSE *(coming to POPPY R.C. in front of the couch. Takes jemmy)*. Well! Look at the weight of that.

POPPY. What is it?

AMBROSE. That's part of a burglar's outfit. *(Goes to panel up L.C.)* Oh! Poppy, look! That's what they've been working at—it's a sliding panel, Poppy, but it won't slide.

POPPY *(on his R. at panel L.C.)*. Can't you get it open, Ambrose?

AMBROSE. Well! I've got it further than they did. *(Panel opens.)* Why, it's hollow, Poppy; there's nothing here at all. It's very dusty and dirty.

POPPY. What is it?

AMBROSE. A secret cupboard.

POPPY. A secret cupboard? And you didn't know of it?

AMBROSE. No—but those burglars did, and that's what they came for, Poppy. *(He uses the poker as a lever, forcing back the sliding panel, then feels about in cupboard.)*

POPPY. Is there anything there?

AMBROSE. No, nothing . . . only dirt and dust. *(He finds the sheet of parchment.)* Here is something. *(He gets up and comes C.)*

POPPY *(on his L., very excited)*. What is it?

AMBROSE. Only an old sheet of parchment.

POPPY. Well, you wouldn't think burglars would go to all that trouble for an old sheet of parchment, would you?

(AMBROSE, *down stage C.*, is examining it. POPPY looking over his L. shoulder.)

AMBROSE. Poppy!

POPPY. What—yes?

AMBROSE. This is a letter to his descendants from old Ambrose Applejohn, the founder of our family, the man who built this house, hundreds of years ago.

POPPY. Old Ambrose Applejohn?

AMBROSE (*still reading*). Yes, but his name wasn't Applejohn!

POPPY. No?

AMBROSE (*still reading*). No—he was Applejack—Captain Applejack. (*Lowering the paper and looking at her solemnly.*) Poppy!

POPPY. Yes?

AMBROSE. The founder of our family was the notorious pirate Captain Applejack.

POPPY. Well, I really don't know what to say.

AMBROSE (*reading again*). He assumed the name of Applejohn to deceive the King's men who were hunting him: there's a brain for you, Poppy. And by these means escaped execution dock.

POPPY. Well, it was very careless of him to leave that paper lying about.

AMBROSE (*reading as he moves across to below table L.C. and turns to its L. side, facing POPPY, who comes to its R.*). He left it to his descendants, that is, you and me and Aunt Agatha, so that his descendants might find his hidden treasure.

POPPY. Hidden treasure?

AMBROSE (*reading*). Bars of gold, hundreds of them, and precious stones, rubies, diamonds, pearls, bushels of them, a fortune, a colossal fortune! (*Puts parchment on the table and turns up the reading lamp.*)

POPPY. Bushels of diamonds!—where did he hide them?

AMBROSE. Here in this house.

POPPY. Here in this house, and we never knew it?

AMBROSE. No—but those burglars did.

POPPY. You mean—

AMBROSE. That is why they came here.

POPPY (*looking round apprehensively*). Oh, goodness!

AMBROSE. And they will come back again, Poppy.

POPPY. Oh, they wouldn't dare.

AMBROSE. Oh, wouldn't they? Desperate men will dare anything for that.

POPPY. You mean even if we are here?

AMBROSE. Yes. You know how lonely this house is, it is miles

from anywhere. I am the only man here except Lush. We couldn't put up a fight against them. (*He moves below the table to c.*) Poppy, telephone the police station, tell them to send some men here, quick; in any case it will be half an hour before they can get here.

POPPY. Yes.

(*She goes to the top of the table and picks up the telephone—he crosses and looks out of the window—locks it and pulls curtains—POPPY is ringing telephone without response.*)

Hello, hello, hello, hello (*ad lib.*).

AMBROSE. Can't you get them?

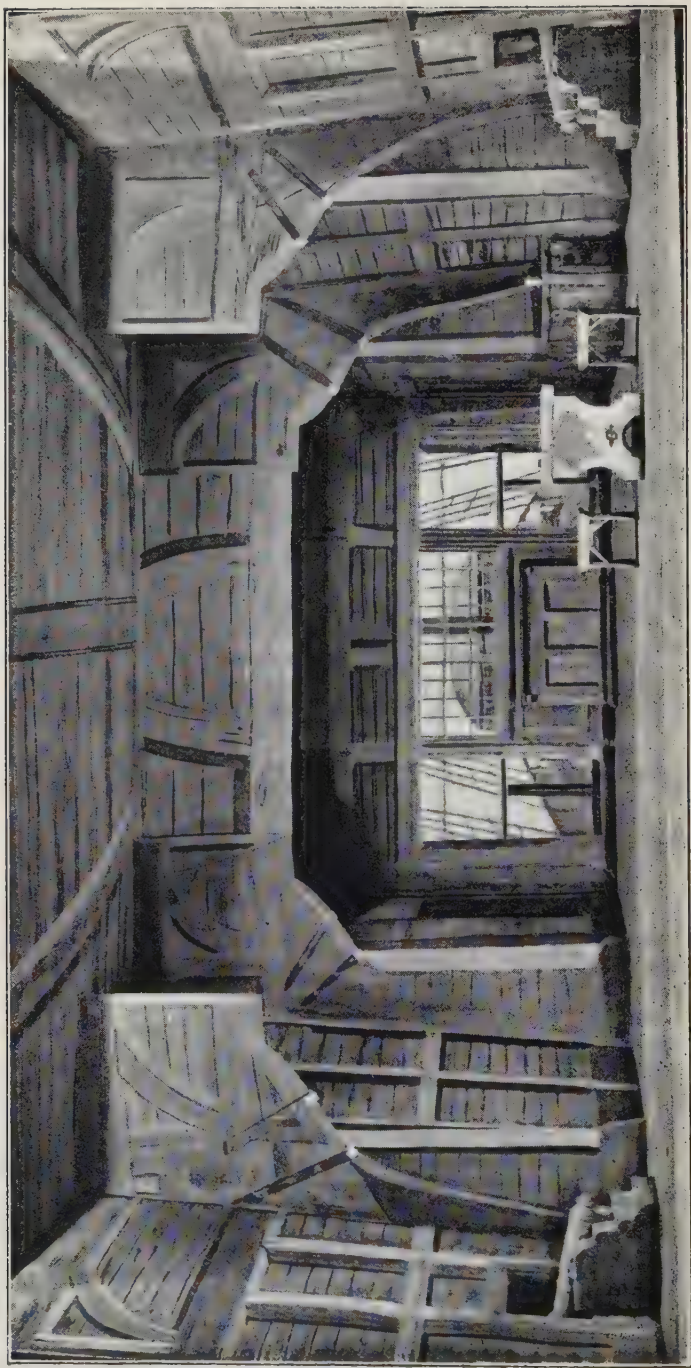
POPPY. No—I can't even get Exchange.

AMBROSE. Let me try. (*He crosses to R. of the table L.C. and takes telephone from her. Shaking it up and down.*) Hello . . . hello . . . (*Repeats business with receiver. Shouting.*) Hello . . . (*Putting telephone down.*) Poppy, the wire is dead . . . it has been cut. (*He turns to c.*) Ten miles from a town . . . a house full of women to guard. A band of cut-throats outside waiting to attack—and a colossal fortune at stake!

POPPY (*coming down L. of the table to below it*). But, Ambrose, you wanted adventure—

AMBROSE. Yes, and, by George, I've got it!

QUICK CURTAIN.



ACT II

Three hours have elapsed.

The SCENE is the deck-house of an old pirate ship, but the illusion to be preserved from the opening of the Act to the moment in the action when AMBROSE concludes his song is that he and POPPY are still in the library of the house in Cornwall. The whole stage is in darkness with the exception of a small halo of light from the reading lamp on the table L.C., which faintly illuminates AMBROSE, who is seated in his arm-chair on the L. of the table, and POPPY who is seated on the stool on the R. of it reading from the old parchment.

The light from the lamp must be so arranged that no other objects can be identified. The lamp should be backed with black card and a pin light used.

The library table, with lamp, etc., AMBROSE's arm-chair and PEGGY's stool are removed in the black-out as directed later. The ship's table and the two heavy stools are set up C. ready to be put in place.

The changes of costume can be partially effected during the wait, POPPY effecting the completion during her exit and AMBROSE during the black-out.

POPPY (*reading*). "And off the island of Excanaba we captured the Portuguese brigantine *Faraleone*—her crew put up a gallant fight—but we killed all hands, save one—a woman—the daughter of the Captain, a haughty wench—but comely." It doesn't tell us where the treasure is hidden, does it?

(*AMBROSE has fallen asleep.*)

AMBROSE (*singing in his sleep*). There were fifteen men on the dead man's chest.

(*POPPY is startled.*)

(*Not waking.*) Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum——

(*An alarm clock rings suddenly. This may be rung off stage L.*)

(*Half awake.*) What's that? What's that noise?—Poppy, what's that bell?

POPPY. The alarm clock I brought down to keep you awake.

AMBROSE. What? . . . Why, I haven't been asleep.

POPPY. You fell asleep again. It woke you up.

AMBROSE. Well, why did you turn out all the lights?

POPPY. To see if anyone was moving in the garden.

AMBROSE. What time is it?

POPPY (*peering at the alarm clock on the table*). Five minutes to two.

AMBROSE. Five minutes to two! I haven't been up so late as this for years.

POPPY. Think—any minute those men might attack us.

AMBROSE. I know, but I simply can't keep awake. We have been waiting three hours, and nothing has happened. It has been most fatiguing.

POPPY. Perhaps if I went to the kitchen and got you a cup of coffee.

AMBROSE. That would help enormously, Poppy.

POPPY. Then I'll go at once. (*Rises from stool.*)

AMBROSE. Good.

POPPY (*behind the table, out of the light*). Ambrose, you won't fall asleep while I am away?

AMBROSE. Of course not.

POPPY. Shan't be long. (*She disappears in the darkness, going off stage by door up L.*)

AMBROSE (*sleepily*). Certainly I won't fall asleep—very important I should keep awake—very important. (*His head falls forward.*)

(*Slowly a light grows on the R. of the room and BOROLSKY in pirate's costume is seen standing motionless, his arms folded. A terrible scowl is upon his face.*)

BOROLSKY may be upon the stage from the opening. His figure should be backed with a black screen and picked up at the cue with a baby spot in floats.)

(*In the dark.*) What's that sight! Borolsky! (*As he speaks the vision fades away.*) Oh, what an awful dream, what a horrible face! I really must keep awake. I must have fallen asleep again . . . I was dreaming. (*He gets more and more sleepy.*) That's won't do . . . that won't do—no . . . I must keep awake. (*He sleeps again. He sings, at first very timidly, and gradually works into a raucous voice.*)

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum.

Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum.

Drink and the devil had done with the rest—

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum.

(*At this point the reading lamp dies out and all is total darkness.*)

AMBROSE continues singing. BOROLSKY retains his position. The

table, lamp, etc., the arm-chair and stool are taken straight up stage and off at back by sliding door L.C. and door L. The screen behind BOROLSKY off R. down stage. The ship's table and stools are brought to position. See picture of scene.)

Fifteen men of them stiff and stark—

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum.

Ten of the crew had the murder mark—

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum.

'Twas a cutlass swipe or an ounce of lead

Or a yawning hole in a battered head,

And the scuppers glut with a rotting red ;

And there they lay,

Aye, damn my eyes—

Their lookouts clapped

On Paradise,

Their souls just bound the contra-wise—

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum.

(At the end of the song, all lights up to arranged effect.)

(AMBROSE, who is disclosed in pirate costume. He sits on stool L. of table, the picture of a rakish Pirate. Whereas before his singing has been more of a murmur, he now bawls at the top of his lungs.)

(N.B.—It is most essential that the dream should be played with perfect sincerity and seriousness.)

(AMBROSE, after a continuance of part of his song, turns and sees BOROLSKY standing menacingly with folded arms, and rises.)

(Down L.) So you are still here, my mate, are you ?

BOROLSKY. Still here, Captain.

AMBROSE *(going up L.C. and bawling off door L.)*. Boy—boy, fetch me some grog—blast ye !

POPPY *(off stage)*. Aye, aye, Captain !

AMBROSE. Hell stir your stumps ! *(To BOROLSKY, coming slightly above him R.C.)* Well, are you deaf, man ?

BOROLSKY *(sulkily)*. No.

AMBROSE. Then you heard me order you on deck with the men ?

BOROLSKY *(implacably)*. Aye—I did.

AMBROSE. And you haven't obeyed me. Hell ! I'll have no insubordination aboard my craft. Bustle away.

(BOROLSKY does not move. AMBROSE swaggers close to him. There is a deadly menace in his voice when he speaks, thrusting his face forward.)

Hark ye, me mate—I'm a mild man—and timid, lovin' peace and averse to brawling—d'you see ?—but if you don't go at once *(drawing dagger)* I'll cut your black heart out—blast ye !

(*The fierceness of his tone overawes BOROLSKY—the straight stare of his eye dominates him—he weakens. He turns up and shuffles off, door R.C. and off R.*)

(*Swaggers back to R. of table L.C.*). Scum! Scum!

(*POPPY enters. She is dressed as the ship's boy in worn and ragged sea clothes. She carries a pannikin of rum—she approaches him timidly. She comes down L. of the table.*)

POPPY. Your grog, Captain.

AMBROSE. Give it here. (*He snatches the pannikin across the table and drains it at a draught, smacks his lips.*) Warmin' to the innards—d'you see! (*Placing the pannikin on the table, he leans forward confidentially.*) Boy, close yonder doors. (*Pointing to doors at back.*)

POPPY. Aye, aye, sir. (*She goes up to doors and closes them, L.C. door first.*) 'Tis done, Captain. (*Coming down R.C. from R.C. door.*)

AMBROSE. 'Tis well. (*Motioning POPPY to silence.*) Sh!—Sh!—Sh!

(*After the third "Sh!" three of the men pass window C. from R. AMBROSE, seeing them, bawls at top of his lungs:*)

Bustle along, ye lousy lubbers—blast ye! (*Up C.*)

(*The men disappear terror-stricken L.*)

Scum!

(*AMBROSE, after a furtive look about, turns to the sideboard at back, and opening a secret door, takes out a rusty old iron box. It is evidently very heavy, he carries it to the L. corner at the top of the table, lifts the lid and digging his hands in opens them and lets a glittering stream of jewels fall back into the box. POPPY comes to the R. of the table and stares fascinated. PENGARD, who in AMBROSE's dream has become a Chinese bosun—oily, secret and sly—appears at the back window and stares in furtively.*)

Feast your eyes, boy, 'tis the booty I captured from the Portuguese brigantine. See that ruby? See that pearl? 'Tis a King's ransom. The master tried to hide it from me, and though I am a gentle soul, such perfidy could not be borne. So I took my cutlass and clove his head in twain. (*Pantomiming the business of cutting his head in twain.*) D'you see? Feast your eyes once more, boy. (*Diving his hands into treasure again.*) 'Tis a King's ransom, lad, diamonds—rubies—sapphires—pearls—— (*Shuts lid of box.*)

(*Chinaman disappears R.*)

POPPY. Blow me tight! (*Going up C. to window, gazing round*

fearfully and coming back to c.) An I whisper a word in your ear, you'll not beat me?

AMBROSE. Nay, lad, 'tis my pleasure always to be kindly (*sits on stool R. of table*). Say on!

POPPY (*in a low voice, after looking cautiously about*). The crew——

AMBROSE. Well?

POPPY. The crew—they know of this treasure.

AMBROSE (*in a voice of thunder*). What!

POPPY (*cowering and backing away*). You said you'd not beat me.

AMBROSE. Nay, nor will I, if ye tell me all.

POPPY (*frightened*). I will, sir—ah, I will.

AMBROSE. Speak then, quickly.

POPPY (*advancing to him again*). I have heard rumours——

AMBROSE. Well?

POPPY. Whispers——

AMBROSE. Well?

POPPY (*R. of c.*). The men say—an ye do not share this with them, they will rise against you—you know what a villainous crew they are. You will not brave them?

AMBROSE (*rises and goes L.*). Aye, that I will—timid as I am—d'you see—and hatin' trouble, I'll show them Ambrose Applejack is master here. I'll face them single-handed if I must. (*Goes c.*) I'll slit them ear to ear—what I have I keep. (*Turns to the treasure box and bangs his hand on it.*)

POPPY. Then you'll give them no share?

AMBROSE. Nay, lad, not a stiver. 'Tis my fancy to take this, return to England and become respectable—aye, that has always been my goal—respectability. I became a pirate that I might amass enough to afford me so great a luxury—and the means are here. Now, lad, go tell the Bosun to fetch hither the Portuguese woman we captured on the brigantine. I am in the mood for dalliance. (*Swaggering down to extreme R.*)

POPPY (*c.*). Aye, aye, sir. (*POPPY does not move.*)

AMBROSE (*raising his voice*). Bustle along now, an ye don't wish a beatin'——

POPPY. Aye, aye, sir. (*Goes off terrified R.C. to R., opening the sliding door.*)

(*Alone, AMBROSE crosses to the table, takes up iron box and replaces it in the hiding-place c. As he finishes this, he swaggers across the stage down L. The Bosun enters from door R.C., dragging in ANNA, who in place of the fiery Slav has become a languid Southern woman. She is pale, haughty and very frightened. The Chinaman throws her on the ground c. up stage, where she gathers herself to her knees, cowering. The Bosun goes to R. against the wall above the gun. As AMBROSE approaches her, ANNA shrinks from him. He chucks her under the chin.*)

AMBROSE (*L. of ANNA*). How now, my pretty!

ANNA (*in a panic*). Oh——

AMBROSE (*reassuringly*). Tut—tut! Ha! Ha! Ha!

(BOROLSKY *enters sliding door R.C.*)

(AMBROSE *pauses as he sees BOROLSKY—he turns and faces him.*

BOROLSKY *does not flinch, but comes C. and stands over ANNA.*

AMBROSE *takes a step back.*)

So you are here again?

BOROLSKY. Aye, Captain—I am here again.

AMBROSE. And may I ask with what object?

BOROLSKY (*placing a hand on ANNA, who shrinks to her L. on the floor*). The woman pleases me.

AMBROSE. Then indeed you are unfortunate—for she has taken my fancy also. Do you see?

BOROLSKY. 'Twas I who captured her.

AMBROSE. Enough, man, the wench is mine.

BOROLSKY. But, Captain——

AMBROSE. Hark ye—by nature I am as placid as a rivulet ambling through a meadow, but I brook no interference between me and a lady. (*He takes out a dagger, raises his left leg, gives the blade two quick twists on his boot and advances menacingly to BOROLSKY.*) Do you still question my claim to the wench?

(*For a moment BOROLSKY stands tense, and whips out his dagger—The Chinaman, seeing knives flashing, backs up to C. by the old sideboard. Suddenly BOROLSKY relaxes, puts up his dagger, turns and goes out by sliding door R.C. to R. AMBROSE, without moving, watches him go, and then turns L. and sticks his dagger into the table.*)

Scum!

(AMBROSE *comes C. and makes ANNA a low bow.*)

I cry you pardon—'tis not my wont to keep a lady waiting.

(*All at once ANNA collapses and crawls at his feet.*)

ANNA (*speaking with a Portuguese accent*). Mercy—mercy!

AMBROSE. Come, come, my girl—dry your eyes and rise, that I may feast upon your beauty. (*He stoops down and helps her to her feet.*)

ANNA. My beauty—it is not for you. (*Goes a little R.*)

AMBROSE (C.). For whom, then?

ANNA. I am a true wedded wife.

AMBROSE. Poof!—a husband is soon forgot.

ANNA (*shrinking down R. to gun*). Before I surrender, I will kill myself——

AMBROSE. They all say that, and yet never have I seen one die. (*Swaggers down L. and then crosses in front to ANNA.*)

ANNA (*hysterical*). I mean it—do you hear?—I mean it——

AMBROSE. Come, you are overwrought—a glass of grog. 'Twill hearten you. (*Turning up R.C.*) Bosun, fetch us some pannikins of rum.

(*Chinaman PENGARD touches his forehead and turns slowly L. AMBROSE rushes at him and kicks him off L. door.*)

ANNA (*R., tearfully*). What shall I do? What shall I do?

AMBROSE (*coming down to her, catches her left wrist, pulls her forward to C., swings her round and throws her on to the stool R. of table*). Sit ye here, my lass—and look upon me. (*He stands with his legs wide open in front of her.*) Is there naught that takes your eye?

(*He swaggers up and down. ANNA turns away, and at a moment when he is turned away her eyes fall upon the dagger sticking in the table. An idea possesses her. She is about to reach for it when he turns towards her. With a great effort she forces a smile.*)

ANNA. You are in truth a mighty man.

AMBROSE (*standing over her again—expansively*). Come, come, that's better.

(*Chinaman PENGARD enters with grog L. and passes to C., R. of AMBROSE, who turns away from ANNA to get grog. Like lightning ANNA reaches over, takes the dagger and hides it in the folds of her dress.*)

PENGARD (*as he gets C.*). The grog, Captain——

AMBROSE (*stepping back clear of the Chinaman and pointing to table*). Set it there, and go, blast ye!

(*Chinaman PENGARD slinks past in front of AMBROSE and sets grog down. AMBROSE hastens his departure through door L. with a kick. He then swaggers to the top of the table and takes up cup.*)

I drink to your eyes, your hair, to all your loveliness. (*He raises the cup and pauses.*) Sip but a mouthful, lass, 'twill warm you.

ANNA (*forcing a smile*). Perhaps it will. (*She takes the cup, pretends to drink, and hands it back.*)

AMBROSE. I'll warrant that makes you feel better, eh? (*He drains the cup.*)

ANNA. 'Tis not unpleasant.

AMBROSE. No, there's naught like good liquor to cheer you up.

ANNA. I . . . I . . . feel more cheerful.

AMBROSE. And your husband—he does not trouble you now, eh?

ANNA (*coquetting with him*). You said he would be soon forgot.

AMBROSE. Ah, ha! that's better. (*He swaggers down L. of the table and sits facing R. on the end of it.*) You are beautiful in tears, but you are far more beautiful when you smile—do you see!

ANNA. You flatter——

AMBROSE. Nay, I am but a blunt sailor—unused to capering before the ladies.

ANNA. 'Tis hard to believe that.

(It is clear to the audience that she is merely leading him on.)

AMBROSE. I swear you caught my fancy when I first laid my eyes on you. *(He leans over towards her.)*

ANNA. Nay, nay, love at first sight, there is no such thing.

AMBROSE. 'Tis the only love worth having.

ANNA. And I have never known it. *(She rises, taking a step to R.)*

AMBROSE *(getting off the table and going close to her on her L., leaning over her)*. You feel it now?

ANNA *(tremulously)*. Nay—nay——

AMBROSE. Do you deny it?

ANNA. You must not make me answer that.

AMBROSE. Not with words, lass, but with kisses. *(He turns to and sits on the stool R. of the table, holding out his arms to her invitingly.)* Come, sit upon my knee and let us talk sweet nothings.

ANNA *(getting a little further R.)*. I cannot.

AMBROSE. But you must.

ANNA *(protesting)*. You must not.

AMBROSE. Yes, I say! *(He jumps up, seizes her wrist and attempts to draw her to the stool.)* I swear I will have that kiss.

(As he steps backwards, pulling her, he knocks against the stool and throws it over—he turns to pick it up, releasing ANNA'S hand. Her chance has come, the one she has played for; she draws the dagger from dress and raises arm to strike him. Only just in time to save himself, he turns and catches her wrist; for a space they struggle silently, then the dagger falls from her hand to the floor. He pushes her to the ground R.C., near the gun—turns, picks up his dagger, and moves up C.)

Hell-cat!

ANNA *(lying on the floor, her head in her arms, crying)*. Oh!—Oh!——

AMBROSE *(smilingly, as he crosses to her)*. You need not hide your head in shame. I like you all the more for having spirit. Do you see—— *(Swings down to L.)*

ANNA *(turning on him—still on floor)*. You knave—you cut-throat—I hate you——

AMBROSE. Hate? 'Tis only a step from love. Now will I have that kiss. *(Crosses to ANNA R.C.)*

(Realizing resistance is useless, ANNA rises and stands motionless. He takes her in his arms and kisses her fiercely. After he has kissed her she swings round on her R. to get away—he draws her back, having hold of her L. wrist. She struggles and they get up stage to

opposite the cabin door R. He kicks open the door with his foot and pushes her off R.)

Now go in there—and meditate on't! (*He closes the door after her and sighs pleasurably.*) Magnificent woman! (*He then swaggers across to the sliding door L.C., pulls it open and discovers one of the crew standing there.*) You lazy lubber! Blast ye!

(*The man flies in terror.* AMBROSE goes out of the door to L. When he has gone PENGARD opens the door L., where he has gone out, and peers in cautiously. Seeing the cabin is empty, he steals in and furtively crosses to where AMBROSE'S secret cupboard is. He taps the wall—trying, but without success, to discover secret opening. While he is doing this, BOROLSKY appears at sliding door R.C. He sees PENGARD, but the latter does not see him. Softly he comes down and stealing across catches PENGARD by the throat. PENGARD in fright screams out a Chinese oath. BOROLSKY throws Chinaman down stage C. on to floor.)

PENGARD (*shrilly*). Chuna muka hi!

BOROLSKY (*holding knife at his throat*). You Chinese dog—you meant to betray us.

PENGARD. No—no. Me only tly flind tleasure for clew.

BOROLSKY. Ssh! There is no longer need to look for it secretly.

(*He turns and moves a little towards sliding door L.C., looking off.*)

PENGARD (*rising and speaking tensely*). Then——

BOROLSKY (*up L.C., nodding*). Mutiny.

PENGARD (C.). The clew——

BOROLSKY. Those we trust have sworn.

PENGARD (*rubbing hands together*). Good. When will it be?

BOROLSKY. When he returns to this cabin, we will catch him in a trap—like a rat. (*Coming C.*)

PENGARD (*eagerly*). Let me slitee throat, he beat me once——

BOROLSKY. And he trifled with me. Also, you shall have your wish—torture him! (*Through his teeth.*)

PENGARD. Wellee good! (*Chuckling.*)

BOROLSKY. Where is the woman?

(PENGARD points to the cabin R., where AMBROSE has put ANNA.)

Good. See that he does not disturb. (*Growls.*)

(Chinaman PENGARD goes to door L.C. As BOROLSKY growls, he does a slight jump, expecting a kick, and goes out to L. BOROLSKY opens the door of cabin and beckons ANNA out with his head twice. She does not come.)

Come here.

(ANNA enters and shrinking past him goes to L.C. BOROLSKY standing back above the door.)

(Dropping to her R.). Beautiful woman!

ANNA (frightened). What would you with me?

BOROLSKY. Damn me, lass, I've come to save you.

ANNA. To save me?

BOROLSKY. Aye, from the clutches of yon swaggering villain.

ANNA. You?

BOROLSKY. Or is it that his caperings have found favour in your eyes?

ANNA. No—no! I hate him! I hate him!

BOROLSKY. Good. Then if you but do my bidding you shall have vengeance in full measure.

ANNA. Vengeance?

BOROLSKY. Aye. Do you hunger for it?

ANNA. Aye—but how can you—

BOROLSKY. Mutiny.

ANNA. Mutiny?

(As ANNA says "Mutiny," BOROLSKY quickly looks round, holding up his hand to silence her.)

BOROLSKY. Sssh! When he is dead I shall be captain and you shall be mine.

ANNA (terror-stricken). Oh!

BOROLSKY (R.C., pointing up stage to where the treasure is hidden). There be diamonds, rubies, pearls—jewels without number in his treasure chest. I shall deck you with them—

(ANNA shrinks down R. He goes to her L. hand, takes her arm and pulls her roughly to him.)

Why do you shrink from me?

ANNA. Nay, I do not shrink from you—I am all eagerness to learn your plan—

BOROLSKY (throwing her hand away). So that you may betray me to him?

ANNA (drawing herself up). Have I not said I hated him?—how can I help you if I do not know your plan?

(He takes her hand again and passes her over to his L. Going up R.C., he looks off at sliding door to R. and then comes down and faces ANNA, who has turned at L.C.)

BOROLSKY (going close to ANNA). The crew are my puppets—they will do my bidding. I only await the moment when I may fall upon him unawares. It is there that you will help me—

ANNA. How?

BOROLSKY. When he returns here you will grow kind. You will

lure him to forget all save you, and then—then I shall strike.
(*Drawing dagger.*)

ANNA. 'Tis well thought out.

BOROLSKY. And you will do your part?

ANNA. I will.

BOROLSKY. I can trust you? (*Replacing dagger.*)

ANNA. Yes.

BOROLSKY (*taking her chin in his hands and looking into her eyes.*)
I wonder—

ANNA. You must not doubt me.

BOROLSKY. If you were mine I would not.

ANNA. No—

BOROLSKY. Then why not make you mine now and be safe?

ANNA (*drawing back in terror*). What do you mean?

BOROLSKY (*seizing her in his arms*). By heavens, I will!

ANNA (*struggling*). No—no!

PENGARD (*re-enters by sliding door L.C.*). Sssh! He is coming.

(*He stands inside the doorway, bending forward to L., looking off and holding his right hand out warningly towards BOROLSKY.*)

AMBROSE (*off L.*). Avast there, ye lubbers, or you'll all be in the scuppers!

(BOROLSKY *pushes ANNA into room R., where she was before, and slinks off on deck. Door R.C.*)

(AMBROSE *enters L.C.* PENGARD *bows, stepping back before him.*)

PENGARD. You come back, Claptain, eh—

AMBROSE (*coming down C.*). Yes. And how is it I find you still here?

PENGARD (*working round behind AMBROSE to a little above him on his L.*). Me think—Claptain want more grog.

AMBROSE (*going to stool L. of table and sitting*). When I want more grog, Bosun, I'll let you know. Go to your post on deck, blast ye!

PENGARD (*who has stepped back towards sliding door L.C.*). Aye, aye, Claptain.

(PENGARD *touches his forehead and turns up stage. AMBROSE takes out his snuff-box. PENGARD, seeing this, turns and drawing an ugly curved knife, creeps towards him. Evidently he is going to kill him now. AMBROSE sees him out of the tail of his eye, lets him come quite close and then suddenly springs up. PENGARD turns and AMBROSE with one tremendous kick lifts him almost to the sliding door L.C., through which he makes a flying exit.*)

AMBROSE. Scum—scum! (*He re-seats himself on the stool and takes his snuff.*)

(*The door R. quietly opens and ANNA enters.*)

ANNA (*in a whisper at the door, looking furtively round her*). Captain——

AMBROSE (*c., turning to her with a broad smile*). What—come for another kiss? I thought you would.

ANNA. Nay, nay—— (*Coming c.*) I have come to warn you—you are in great danger. (*Looks up stage R. and L. fearfully.*)

AMBROSE. Ah—you have found another dagger?

ANNA. 'Tis not me you must fear, but your crew.

AMBROSE. My crew?

ANNA. Mutiny.

AMBROSE (*rising*). What talk is this?

ANNA. I heard them planning, but a moment since.

AMBROSE. Who?

ANNA. The Bosun and the Mate. Oh, I fear you, but that man is horrible.

AMBROSE. The Bosun and the Mate——

ANNA. They said that when you returned to the cabin, the crew would set upon you, and kill you.

(AMBROSE *looks up stage.*)

AMBROSE. You dream——

ANNA. Nay, I swear it is the truth.

AMBROSE. Mutiny, they wouldn't dare. 'Twas some idle jest——

(*Outside faintly comes the sound of cutlass striking cutlass, evidently the mutiny has begun.*)

ANNA (*laying her hand upon his arm*). No—hark to that!

AMBROSE. Blast 'em, 'tis true!

(*Outside POPPY can be heard crying "Captain, Captain!" She rushes in L.C. and stands looking off L. in the doorway.*)

POPPY. Captain, Captain! A mutiny, a mutiny! (*She closes the sliding door.*)

AMBROSE. So they have dared. (*He takes ANNA by the arm and leads her down L., passes her in front of him towards the gun and takes up a position on the L. of the table. POPPY goes to window c., looks off R. and then closes the door R.C. and comes down R.C.*)

POPPY. They are coming—they are coming here for you.

AMBROSE. Well, let them come, all of them. I'll show them Ambrose Applejack is master here, d'you see——

(*The sounds outside are growing louder and louder.*)

Can I trust you, boy?

POPPY. Aye, aye, sir.

AMBROSE (*crossing R. to POPPY, giving her a pistol from his belt*). Then take this and use it if you must.

(ANNA is extreme L. AMBROSE stands, facing up, L.C. POPPY R. The noises reach a crescendo, the doors are burst open and a group of sailors headed by BOROLSKY rush in from the door R.C. and another group headed by PENGARD bursts through door L.C. ANNA gives a piercing scream. AMBROSE faces them—they halt. Crew grouped at back. BOROLSKY up stage in front of men R.C. PENGARD in front of men up L.C.)

Halt! What the hell does this mean?

BOROLSKY. We've come to take the ship.

AMBROSE. And you think you are men enough to do that?

BOROLSKY. Aye, we do.

CREW. Aye, we do. Yes, etc.

(Long and pronounced utterances from all the villainous crowd.)

AMBROSE. Then you have all gone mad—back, back to your posts, I say.

CREW. No. No, to hell with him! etc.

AMBROSE. Go, or you shall feel the lash—go, I say——

BOROLSKY (coming down R.). We mean to take this ship. We mean to take this ship.

AMBROSE. And you'll never do it—not if you were ten times your number—why, you fools, do you think I fear you!

(PENGARD in the meantime has slipped down L. of the table with his knife in his hand, and is now ready below the table to spring on AMBROSE. POPPY sees him.)

POPPY. Take care, Captain!

(AMBROSE turns about just in time to catch PENGARD as he leaps for him. They struggle. BOROLSKY, seeing the Captain's attention engaged, starts forward to attack AMBROSE at the back. POPPY points her pistol at him.)

Back or I fire!

(BOROLSKY stops and shrinks back on his men, who press forward, watching the fight. The struggle between AMBROSE and PENGARD continues. At last AMBROSE gets the best of it, and pressing PENGARD across the table L.C. plunges a dagger into his heart. PENGARD with a scream rolls off the table and falls face down on the deck dead. AMBROSE turns to the crowd and wipes the dagger on the skirt of his coat.)

AMBROSE (down stage L.C.). Now who wishes to be the first to follow him to hell?

(The crew are all cowed and no one moves. They turn up stage.)

What, have you lost your taste for mutiny already? Won't your leader cross swords with me?

(BOROLSKY turns to go R.C. door. One of the crew pulls him back as he tries to slink off and pushes him down R.)

BOROLSKY. There is no need—what if you kill me or ten or twenty of us?—you must still surrender.

CREW. Aye! Aye! Surrender! Hell! Death or surrender. We take the ship—the treasure, etc.

AMBROSE. Faint heart!

BOROLSKY. And if you do so quietly, we will spare your life.

CREW. Aye, we'll spare his life! Give us the treasure! etc.

AMBROSE (*shouting them down*). I ask no favours from scum like you. You'll spare me life! (*Spits.*) Come, men, back to your posts or else it will go hard with you.

(*The men do not move.*)

BOROLSKY. Seize him, men——

(*Two of the crew make a rush at AMBROSE, but they are caught by others and held back. The rest of the crew do not move. AMBROSE rushes at one up L., who gets behind the crowd.*)

AMBROSE. Ah—you are in doubt—you do not know which leader to follow. Well then, let Fate decide—we'll leave all to the arbitrament of fortune.

BOROLSKY. What do you mean?

(*The crew growl and mutter.*)

AMBROSE. I'll cut the cards with you.

CREW. Aye! the cards.

AMBROSE. The winner shall be captain.

CREW. Aye! Aye!

AMBROSE. Is that fair, men?

(*The men murmur assent.*)

BOROLSKY (*down C.*). And the woman?

AMBROSE (*L.C.*). The winner takes all.

ANNA (*coming to his L. and falling at his feet*). Oh, mercy! No—no!

AMBROSE (*putting his hand on her head*). The winner takes all.

BOROLSKY. And the loser?

AMBROSE (*indicating with his dagger*). Dies.

(BOROLSKY shrinks back up R. The crew surround him and bar his way to the door—gesticulating wildly—egging him on to the contest, swearing and yelling. He shakes his head and attempts to free himself. At last one of the men puts the point of a knife to his throat—there is sudden silence. BOROLSKY glares at the knife and speaks hoarsely.)

BOROLSKY. I'll do it.

AMBROSE (*who has stood watching L.C., turns to the L. of the table*). Good. The cards are here. (*He produces a pack of cards from the table drawer and shuffles them. Then takes out two more packs.*) We will have three decks. The High Man wins.

(*The crew press forward, pushing BOROLSKY in front of them to down-stage corner of the table. He shrinks from the Chinaman's body. Two or three of the crew pick it up and carry it quickly off R.C. door, returning immediately to above the table. BOROLSKY sits on stool R. of the table. ANNA has drawn back to the gun L. The crew group themselves from behind BOROLSKY round the top of the table to AMBROSE'S R. hand. POPPY stands on the outskirts of the crowd behind BOROLSKY. All press forward and fight for places.*)

BOROLSKY. Two out of three tries.

CREW. Aye! Aye!

AMBROSE (*placing the cards in front of BOROLSKY*). Agreed—if so ye wish it.

(*All watch with tense suspense. AMBROSE with cool composure smiles at ANNA and pushes the stool L. of table forward with his foot, at the same time signing her to sit. As BOROLSKY advances his hand over the cards ANNA sinks on to the stool, tensely watching. BOROLSKY hesitates for a moment, then makes his cut.*)

BOROLSKY (*in loud triumph*). The Knave! (*Shows the card.*)

(*A roar from the men. When they have quietened down AMBROSE makes his cut.*)

AMBROSE (*quietly*). The ten.

BOROLSKY (*leaping to his feet*). I have won the first!

(*Shouts of triumph, oaths and cheers from the crew. Ad lib.*)

AMBROSE (*coolly, as the noise subsides*). There are two more, remember.

BOROLSKY (*spitting on the back of his hand, sits and cuts again*). The Queen! The Black Queen! (*He shows the card to ANNA and leers at her, holding picture.*)

(*This time the result of the cut is received by the crew in tense silence.*)

AMBROSE (*cutting*). The Ace!

BOROLSKY. Ah!

(*A low, deep-drawn, hissing breath from the crew. BOROLSKY rises in terror at this cut, and turns on his R., as if to make an attempt to get away. The crew stop him. POPPY holds her pistol at him.*)

AMBROSE. Now we are even.

(*BOROLSKY, almost paralysed with fear, cannot summon courage to cut the third time. Twice his hand hovers over the pack and is drawn*

back ; one of the crew grips his arm and holds his hand to the cards. While he is hesitating AMBROSE speaks.)

Cut, you mincing sea-louse—blast ye ! cut.

(BOROLSKY cuts. *He has not the courage to look at his card. The men behind him see it and cry out jubilantly.)*

MEN. The King ! The King !!

BOROLSKY (*hysterically*). The King ! (*Very loudly.*) The King !

(AMBROSE cuts an Ace. *Then shows it without speaking. BOROLSKY draws a dagger and lurches at him across the table.*)

You—you——

(*The crew spring at him and amidst a howling pandemonium rush him off R.C. with the intention of throwing him overboard, BOROLSKY screaming for mercy.*)

AMBROSE (*his voice rising above the shouts*). Take him away, men. (*There is a sudden silence off stage.*) So perish all who cross my path. (*He takes a handful of Aces from his pocket and throws them on table.*)

(*To POPPY, who has remained R. of table.*) Aces, my boy, all Aces ! Do you see ?

CURTAIN.

ACT III

The SCENE is the same as Act I.

Five minutes have elapsed from Act I.

When the CURTAIN rises, AMBROSE is discovered asleep in his chair before the fire—precisely as he was before the dream. The reading-lamp is lighted and the rest of the stage is in darkness as it was at the opening of the second Act. It is clear from his manner that AMBROSE is experiencing a most vivid dream. He writhes about in his chair, moaning and groaning inarticulately. Then all at once he sits upright and cries out in a loud voice. He sinks back again, chuckling and murmuring indistinctly. POPPY enters door L., carrying a lighted candle and some coffee on small waiter.)

POPPY (*as she enters*). Ambrose!—Ambrose! (*At the R. of the table.*) He's gone to sleep again.

AMBROSE (*still asleep*). Aces . . . all aces.

POPPY. Ambrose!

(*Seeing he is asleep she blows out the candle, puts coffee on table L.C., goes above it, leans over and touches his arm.*)

Ambrose! Wake up! (*She then goes to R. and turns on the standard lamp.*)

(*Lights up.*)

AMBROSE (*moving about restlessly*). Wake up . . . what . . . wake up!

POPPY (*moving back to R. of the table and turning out the reading-lamp*). Yes, you have been asleep——

AMBROSE. Asleep? Asleep?

(*With a great effort he pulls himself together and manages to open his eyes. The sight of the familiar room startles him. He stares about uncomprehendingly. Still under the influence of his dream, he cannot quite realize his surroundings.*)

POPPY. Here is the coffee. And you promised me you would not fall asleep while I was away! (*Sits on stool R. of table.*)

AMBROSE. But you were such a long time getting it.

(*The clock on the mantel strikes two.*)

POPPY. Two o'clock. I've only been five minutes.

AMBROSE (*thinking of all that has occurred in his dream, he is amazed*). Five minutes . . . only five minutes! It doesn't seem possible.

POPPY. What doesn't seem possible?

AMBROSE. Why—(*pauses*) that you could get the coffee so quickly

(*Pause.*)

(POPPY rises. *Starting up in sudden alarm.*)

POPPY (*slowly re-seating herself; listening*). Sssh!

AMBROSE (*staring at her in wonder*). What is the matter?

POPPY (*tensely, her voice sinking to a whisper*). Didn't you hear anything?

AMBROSE (*his surprise growing*). No. Not a sound.

POPPY (*rises, greatly excited. Her voice is low*). I was sure I heard something. Someone was trying to open that window.

AMBROSE (*startled*). What? (*Rising to down L.*)

POPPY. Yes! Those men have come back. Oh! Yes! (*Going to settee R.*)

AMBROSE. What men?

POPPY. The ones who are after the treasure.

AMBROSE (*dismally*). Good Lord, I had forgotten all about them!

POPPY (C., *with a warning gesture*). Sssh!

AMBROSE (*starting nervously, his heroic manner has quite vanished*). Poppy, don't do that! (*He comes below the table to L.C.*)

POPPY. I heard it again. (*Drawing near to AMBROSE on his R., looking towards the window.*)

AMBROSE. I didn't hear a sound. I do not hear a sound.

POPPY (*in a shrill whisper*). There!

AMBROSE. I don't hear it. (*He gulps nervously.*)

POPPY (*continuing in a low voice*). There is. Someone is trying the window, now. Ambrose, you must go and drive them away. (*She crosses AMBROSE to the fireplace and picks up the poker, and gives it to him.*)

AMBROSE (*crosses to C.*). Yes . . . I suppose I must. (*Takes the poker and with it in his hand he crosses to C. There he pauses, his face brightens a bit.*) You know, I don't hear anything. (*Turns to POPPY.*)

POPPY (L.C.). I am sure they are there.

AMBROSE. Well, if they are—if they are there—— (*He summons his courage, and, going to window R., turns curtain back a little with the end of the poker. Then he gives a great sigh of relief. Opens curtains wide, and looks out.*) No! there is not a sign of them, Poppy—not a sign. I don't think we will hear any more from them to-night, Poppy. (*He returns C.*)

POPPY. You don't?

AMBROSE (C., *some of his jauntness returning*). No. I dare say we have proved too alert for them.

POPPY (*on his L.*). But you said they would risk any danger with such a fortune at stake.

AMBROSE. I was wrong . . . at least, I hope I was.

POPPY (*regretfully*). What a disappointment! (*She moves across AMBROSE to down-stage end of the settee, looking at the window as though almost hoping she might still see something of the burglars.*)

AMBROSE (*surprised*). Poppy?

POPPY (*thoughtfully looking at her fingers*). Oh, Ambrose, it would be too wonderful, if you should rescue me from some horrible danger. That would be an adventure.

AMBROSE. Poppy, there is nothing I loathe so much as adventure. (*He goes L. and returns the poker to the hearth—a little violently.*)

POPPY (*astounded*). Ambrose!

AMBROSE (*coming back to C.*). It's a great mistake ever to get out of the rut.

POPPY. You mean you would let them take the treasure?

AMBROSE. I couldn't stop them, could I? They would be three or four to one.

POPPY. It doesn't matter. You would quell them single-handed.

AMBROSE. You are an optimist. (*Crosses to R. and sits on the settee.*) After all, quelling burglars single-handed is not the occupation for a respectable householder.

POPPY (*moving to R. of C.*). Ambrose, you are not respectable.

AMBROSE (*greatly upset*). Poppy, how dare you? You forget yourself.

POPPY (*unaffected by his reproving tone*). You don't come from a respectable family.

AMBROSE (*scandalized*). I don't?

POPPY (*moving to L. of C.*). No. Your ancestor—the founder of your family—was Applejack—the pirate.

AMBROSE (*slowly, he is beginning to grasp her meaning*). Applejack—the pirate! (*He rises.*)

POPPY. Yes.

AMBROSE (*horrified*). Applejack the pirate!

POPPY (*picking up parchment from table L.C.*). Well! Ambrose, have you forgotten this?

AMBROSE (*his horror growing*). Applejack the—— (*A thought stabs him like a knife.*) Then I am not respectable! Not respectable . . . nothing to cling to. (*He crosses POPPY to the fire.*) Poppy, this is a great shock.

POPPY. Perhaps if you drank your coffee—— (*Going to the R. of the table.*)

AMBROSE (*turning to her impatiently*). No! No coffee. Give me some whisky, blast ye——

(*The last two words have come from him quite unconsciously in the tone*)

Applejack has used in the dream. He is thunderstruck—POPPY is horrified and draws back from the table.)

POPPY (*deeply hurt*). Ambrose!

AMBROSE (*deeply apologetic*). I do beg your pardon. I humbly crave forgiveness. I don't know why I spoke so—but if you wouldn't mind mixing me a whisky and soda, I shall be very grateful. (*Leaning on the table he passes his hand across his forehead.*)

POPPY. Of course not——

(*She goes up R. and mixes him a whisky and soda. While she is doing so, he moves to and sits upon the stool R. of table—almost in a trance.*

POPPY gives him the whisky, coming down on his R.)

Here's your whisky.

AMBROSE. Good! (*He takes a long drink, then he speaks precisely as APPLEJACK did in the dream.*) Ah, there is nothing like grog to warm a man's innards——

(*He is greatly startled at the tone of his own voice. The glass falls from his hand, he stares at POPPY wide-eyed. POPPY picks up the glass and hands it back to him. He places it on the table with a nervous hand.*)

Why did I say that?

POPPY. I don't know, Ambrose. I never heard you speak like that before.

AMBROSE. I never have, and I hope you never will again, Poppy. Such dreadful words.

POPPY (*L. of C., a little above him*). Ambrose, when, a little while ago, I said there was somebody at the window, I didn't hear anything.

AMBROSE. You didn't?

POPPY. No. I wanted to see if you were brave enough to face danger.

AMBROSE. Well, upon my word!

POPPY. And you were. You were timid about it, but you were brave too.

AMBROSE. Brave!

POPPY (*with a gesture of sudden warning*). Sssh! (*She moves in the direction of the settee.*)

AMBROSE (*startled. Rising and backing down L.*). Poppy, don't keep on doing that.

POPPY (*R.C. Tensely*). Someone is moving about upstairs.

AMBROSE. You are not trying to test me again, are you?

POPPY. No. Listen! (*Goes up to door L. and listens.*) Don't you hear it yourself? (*Comes back R.C.*)

AMBROSE (*after a pause, moving to POPPY's L.*). Yes I do. They must have got in through an upper window.

POPPY. Then they have come back.

AMBROSE. Yes, they have come back.

POPPY. Oh! (*She quickly crosses AMBROSE to the table and taking up the parchment returns with it to AMBROSE'S L.*) This is what they are after—and they won't get it!

AMBROSE. Oh! won't they.

(*She puts the parchment in his pocket and turns up c. AMBROSE crosses L. and takes revolver from the table drawer.*)

POPPY (*looking at door L.*). They are coming this way. They'll be here in a moment. What shall we do?

AMBROSE (*pointing to the standard lamp R.*). Stand by that light, Poppy, and do what I tell you. Now obey me implicitly.

She goes to lamp R. AMBROSE moves to above the arm-chair and flattens himself against the wall.)

Now put it out.

(*Lights out.*)

(*She does so. The room is quite dark, except for firelight. A slight pause. The knob of the door is heard softly turning, then the door is opened and the audience see that someone has stealthily entered the room, though they cannot see who it is. The newcomer softly and cautiously creeps into the room. Suddenly AMBROSE'S voice rings crisply out.*)

Don't move another step or I'll fire. Turn up the light, Poppy.

(*POPPY switches on the standard lamp.*)

(*Lights up.*)

(*ANNA VALESKA is discovered c. Carrying her jewel-case and her wrap she stands up c., shaking with fear. AMBROSE'S pistol is aimed directly at her.*)

AMBROSE (*amazed*). Madame Valeska!

ANNA. Monsieur . . . Monsieur, I—

(*AMBROSE advances to the top of the table and POPPY to below the settee.*)

(*That ANNA has come into the room for some secret and guilty purpose is clear enough to the audience, but AMBROSE does not see it.*)

AMBROSE (*smiling broadly*). Anna—

ANNA (*still greatly frightened*). Oh, Monsieur, I—I—

(*She is not sure that his easy tone is genuine. She thinks he may be playing with her and she takes refuge in tears. She comes to the stool R. of table and sinks down upon it, placing her jewels on the table, her head in her arms, sobbing.*)

AMBROSE. Come, come, dear lady, you must not cry. I didn't mean to frighten you. (*Returning the pistol to the drawer.*)

(*His hearty tone convinces her that there is no suspicion behind it. Aside to the audience she shows intense relief, but she still continues her sobs and with averted head stretches her hand out to him.*)

ANNA (*having seen AMBROSE return the pistol*). Oh, my friend!

AMBROSE (*taking her hand and stroking it, he is very pleased*). There—there!

ANNA. My dear friend!

AMBROSE (*below table*). It's very good of you to call me that.

ANNA (*suddenly looking up at him*). But you are.

(*He bends a trifle over her, still retaining her hand. POPPY, who has been watching them with ever-increasing jealousy, takes a step forward.*)

POPPY (*sharply*). Ambrose!

(*In his absorption over ANNA he has forgotten POPPY's presence. He starts back a trifle embarrassed, dropping ANNA's hand.*)

AMBROSE. Eh!

POPPY. You are forgetting those men. You ought to be watching for them.

AMBROSE. Well—I—— (*In his indecision he looks down and meets ANNA's eyes. This look banishes all hesitation.*) Poppy, I can't attend to everything. (*Crossing ANNA.*)

POPPY. But—— (*Moving nearer to AMBROSE.*)

AMBROSE. Now have Lush wakened and tell him to keep a lookout. (*He takes POPPY up to L.C.*) If he hears anything suspicious, he is to let me know at once.

POPPY (*much upset*). Well, don't you think——

AMBROSE (*moving her to the door*). Now, bustle along, Poppy, I have a great deal to say to Madame Valeska.

(*POPPY stands by door L., hesitating.*)

Don't loiter. Hell! stir your stumps.

(*ANNA crosses to R. and puts her jewel-case on the settee. AMBROSE is again startled at hearing his voice with such an odd expression.*)

POPPY moves backwards through the door L., amazed. AMBROSE turns to ANNA.)

Anna!

(*ANNA is in front of the settee. AMBROSE comes above her. Without making it too obvious, she avoids him, and gets down below the settee R.*)

ANNA (*moving to below settee*). Monsieur, I know all that you would say. (AMBROSE *moves nearer—highly pleased*.) You wish to demand of me the explanation of why I creep down here like the thief in the night.

AMBROSE. No, no, I was not going to say anything of the sort.

ANNA. And I will tell you everything.

AMBROSE (*going to her L.*). What I was going to say, was——

ANNA (*interrupting him*). Upstairs in the room—I cannot sleep. The great fear clutch me here. Borolsky will come through the window—he will take from me the jewels of the Grand Duchess Sonia . . . he will kill me if I resist him. It is . . . horrible . . . I cannot rid me of my terror!

AMBROSE. Poor lady! Poor lady! (*He is about to take her hand when she turns to him and lays it on his arm.*)

ANNA. Then, all at once, the thought he come to me this house he is most ancient. There must be many secret hiding-places—if I can find me one and the jewels are safe——

AMBROSE (*knowingly*). Ah! ha! (*Crosses to fireplace, and takes up the poker.*)

ANNA (*coming R.C.*). Then you know of a secret place to hide them?

AMBROSE. None better.

(*He swaggers up to the bookcase and presses back the panel L.C. with the poker. ANNA follows, standing behind him on the R.*)

See!

ANNA (*entranced*). Oh, wonderful!

(*ANNA shows the audience that the discovery of this is what she has been aiming for.*)

AMBROSE. The secret of the ancient family of Applejack—er, Applejohn. Now give me the jewels.

(*She gives him jewel-case from the settee. He places it in cupboard and slides panel back.*)

(*Standing up and shaking the poker.*) Now let Borolsky search for them!

ANNA (*coming down R. of C.*). Oh, my friend, you are magnificent.

AMBROSE (*in his element*). And you are beautiful. (*He advances towards her on her L.*)

ANNA. No, no! You must not speak like that.

AMBROSE. When I look at you, I can speak of nothing else.

(*Suddenly come three distinct knocks from off L. Both stop and listen.*)

ANNA. That must be he—Borolsky.

AMBROSE. Is that his knock? (*He is panic-stricken.*)

(ANNA *clutches at him.*)

(LUSH *enters L. in considerable deshabille.*)

LUSH (*at door*). Beg pardon, sir.

AMBROSE (*with a step up stage towards LUSH*). Well?

LUSH. That foreign gentleman—Mr. Borolsky—is back again.

AMBROSE. He is, eh?

LUSH. Yes, sir, and he has brought a policeman with him.

ANNA (*crossing down L.*). The police!

(AMBROSE *follows ANNA down L.* ANNA *stands by the fire.* AMBROSE *L. of table.*)

(BOROLSKY *enters L., followed by DENNET, who wears the uniform of an Inspector of the police.* BOROLSKY *comes to C. up stage.* DENNET *L.C.*)

BOROLSKY (*C.*). I am in no mood to be kept waiting at your door, sir. Ah, Madame Valeska—well met. (*He bows elaborately to ANNA.*)

AMBROSE. Lush, you may leave us.

(*Exit LUSH door L.*)

And may I ask, sir, the object of this visit?

BOROLSKY. I wish to have a few moments' chat with this lady.

AMBROSE. Then indeed you are unfortunate. (*Handles poker in cutlass fashion.*) I desire to have a chat with her myself. (*He falls somewhat into Applejack's habit. Each time he repeats his manner from the dream his amazement increases.*)

BOROLSKY (*going to down R.C.*). This officer may persuade you to put aside your objection.

(DENNET *moves to C. up stage.*)

AMBROSE (*scornfully*). The police—— (*He looks at DENNET and pauses.*) I don't seem to recall your face, Inspector.

DENNET. I am from Camelford.

AMBROSE. Ah! And your business here?

DENNET. Mr. Borolsky has made certain charges against this lady.

ANNA. Ah!

DENNET. I wish to question her.

AMBROSE. I will not allow it.

DENNET. You cannot prevent it!

AMBROSE. You defy me here—in my own house?

DENNET. I am an officer of the law.

AMBROSE (*contemptuously*). The law—— (*Snapping his fingers.*) That for the law! (*Dream manner comes back to him again.*)

ANNA (*taking his left arm*). Please! I am not afraid to answer his questions. (*Her eyes significantly stray to the panel.*) Now.

AMBROSE (*grasping her meaning*). Of course—that's true. (*To DENNET.*) Ask what questions you like.

DENNET. If you will leave us——

AMBROSE. Never!

ANNA. My friend, it is better that we do all that the policeman asks us.

AMBROSE. But—you wish me to go, Anna——

ANNA. For my sake go—if I need you I will ring.

AMBROSE (*after a slight hesitation*). Very well then . . . (*goes up L.C. to DENNET'S L.*), but I shan't be far away. (*He eyes DENNET coldly.*) Hark ye, me man! I shall be most displeased if this lady suffers any annoyance, Inspector, d'you see? Scum!

(*He turns and swaggers out of the door L., still carrying the poker as a cutlass. DENNET crosses to the door and listens. He pulls out revolver.*)

DENNET. He is not listening.

(*BOROLSKY crosses to ANNA, who meets him c.*)

It's all right.

(*The attitude of the three has completely changed. There is a genial air of comradeship about them. BOROLSKY kisses ANNA—his suave dignity has vanished.*)

BOROLSKY. I'm damned glad you are all right, Gladys—I've worried about you. Well, did you find out where the secret cupboard is?

ANNA (*in perfect English, all her French accent gone*). Sure I did, Jim. That was what I came for, wasn't it?

BOROLSKY. And he doesn't suspect anything?

ANNA. Not a thing. He is too easy. Any man who would believe Bill there was a policeman would believe anything.

BOROLSKY (*admiringly*). Gladys, you are a wonder!

(*Kisses her again.*)

DENNET (*still at door L.*). Oh! chuck this love-making, even if she is your wife. Let's get to work. Where's the cupboard?

ANNA. Over here. (*Going up c. to panel L.C.*) He forced it open with the poker.

BOROLSKY (*following her*). Bill, give me the tongs.

(*DENNET goes down L. of the table to fireplace.*)

Gladys, open the window so that we can get away.

(*ANNA goes behind the settee and opens the window.*)

Bill, stand by the door there. He may take it into his head to come back.

DENNET. Right! (*Coming round the lower end of the table and up L.C., giving BOROLSKY the tongs, crosses to door L. and stands listening. BOROLSKY goes to the panel.*)

ANNA (*after a moment's pause, standing at the back of the settee*). Done it, Jim?

BOROLSKY. Not yet.

ANNA. Hear anything, Bill?

DENNET (*still at door*). Not a sound.

ANNA. Hurry, Jim. (*She is advancing round the top of the settee towards BOROLSKY when she hears something at the window. She turns and exclaims.*) Ah!

(*Her exclamation is caused by the sight of MR. and MRS. PENGARD entering silently through the window. Both carry pistols—as he hears ANNA cry out, BOROLSKY whirls about and faces PENGARD's levelled pistol. ANNA draws back against the bookcase R. of C. BOROLSKY is up C. facing PENGARD, who leans over the upper end of the settee, covering him. MRS. PENGARD stands below the settee, covering DENNET.*)

PENGARD (*crisply*). Hands up, Fleming!

MRS. PENGARD (*her pistol covers DENNET*). You too, Dennet.

(*BOROLSKY drops the tongs and puts his hands up. DENNET raises his and comes to the top of the table L.C.*)

BOROLSKY. Little Pengard! And Mrs. Pengard. So you are in this too, are you?

MRS. PENGARD. Any time there is five hundred thousand pounds lying about loose, we are certain to be in it.

PENGARD. And we are in it alone, Fleming. We don't propose to share on this job.

DENNET. Now, go easy there. You can't cut us out.

MRS. PENGARD. You can do almost anything, if you set your mind on it—and we are dead set on this.

PENGARD. And I don't think we need detain you any longer, Fleming . . . er . . . but before you leave us, you might leave any—er—offensive weapons you may have about you on that table.

(*BOROLSKY lowers his hands quickly—too quickly. PENGARD fathoms his purpose and his voice rings sharply out.*)

Wait!

(*The command is so sharp that BOROLSKY pauses.*)

Put 'em up again.

(*BOROLSKY obeys him. PENGARD's tone becomes genial once more.*)

Perhaps it would be more . . . er . . . comfortable if I did it for you. (*Still covering him with his pistol he rapidly searches him,*

working round in front of him to his L., and takes pistol, jemmy, etc., from his pocket.) You might do the same for Dennet, my love.

MRS. PENGARD (*crosses L. to DENNET*). With pleasure. (*She takes revolver from DENNET.*)

PENGARD. Yes, that's better.

MRS. PENGARD. Rather distasteful being so close to a police uniform. (*She hands DENNET's pistol and a jemmy with her left hand behind her back to PENGARD.*)

PENGARD (*with a grin*). I am afraid if I searched the lady you might be jealous, dearest.

MRS. PENGARD (*contemptuously*). You don't need to bother about her. Gladys never carries a gun. She thinks her wits are a more effective weapon. (*Crosses down R.*)

(BOROLSKY goes R. of table L.C.)

ANNA (*calmly*). And they are. Sit down, Jim, and make yourself comfortable. There's not the least necessity for us to go.

(ANNA comes down on BOROLSKY'S R. and indicates to him that AMBROSE'S revolver is in the drawer of table. BOROLSKY shows he understands.)

MRS. PENGARD. Look here, young woman, we mean business!

ANNA (*quite coolly, to MRS. PENGARD*). Going R. and sitting on the settee). You haven't a chance to get rid of us. Applejohn is awake—a call from me—and he is waiting for a call—will bring him here.

(BOROLSKY goes to the fireplace L. and rests his arm on mantelpiece.

PENGARD keeps him covered with his revolver; standing C.)

You are going to have rather a difficult time getting your hands on that treasure.

PENGARD. Don't pay any attention to her, it's only a trick.

ANNA (*calmly*). Is it? You will find you are greatly mistaken, for I mean to call him and have you both put out.

MRS. PENGARD. You don't dare!

ANNA. Don't I?

MRS. PENGARD. No. If you call him in, I will expose you—I will tell him you are the notorious Big-eyed Gladys, wife of Jim Fleming, the safe-cracker and confidence man.

ANNA (*quietly*). He wouldn't believe you.

MRS. PENGARD. Try it and see.

(PENGARD turns away from BOROLSKY for a second, listening to the women. BOROLSKY seizes his opportunity and opens the drawer of the table.)

PENGARD. Stand back. (*He covers BOROLSKY, who steps back, putting his arms up. DENNET springs forward at a look from BOROLSKY and takes the revolver from the drawer.*)

DENNET (*covering PENGARD*). We don't want any more trouble.
BOROLSKY (*at the fire*). Pretty nippy, Pengard; we must compromise.

PENGARD (*L.C., lowering his revolver*). How much?

BOROLSKY. Half the treasure.

PENGARD. That is rather steep.

BOROLSKY. We are in a position to demand it.

PENGARD (*doubtfully. Turning to MRS. PENGARD*). What do you say, dear?

MRS. PENGARD (*moving to PENGARD'S R.*). Don't be a fool, Horace. We've got to consent.

PENGARD (*to BOROLSKY*). Right. It's a deal.

BOROLSKY (*moving to PENGARD'S L.*). Good! I suppose I can have my pistol now, eh?

MRS. PENGARD (*sharply*). No tricks!

BOROLSKY (*indignantly*). I never double-crossed anyone in my life. Your husband will tell you.

PENGARD. That's right. (*He takes BOROLSKY'S revolver and jemmy out of the pocket into which he has slipped them and returns them to him. Then quietly he turns up to the cupboard.*) One of the best, Jim.

MRS. PENGARD (*putting away her pistol*). Very well then. (*Crossing to ANNA, who is still seated on the settee. Enthusiastically.*) Dearest Gladys, I am so happy that we are going to be friends.

ANNA (*rising and embracing her*). Darling!

(*They are both on the verge of tears.*)

DENNET. This Society chat gives me the pip.

(PENGARD *has prised open the panel, taking the jewel-case from cupboard.*)

PENGARD (*coming to C. up stage with the jewel-case and the tongs*). There is nothing there but this.

(*All turn to face him.*)

ANNA (*to BOROLSKY*). Those are the fake jewels you bought for me at Tacla's. (*Turns down a little to R.*)

(MRS. PENGARD *moves up to PENGARD'S R. to look at the case.*)

PENGARD. Where's the parchment?

BOROLSKY (*crossing to R.C. to ANNA*). How did those jewels get in there?

ANNA. Applejohn.

BOROLSKY. Applejohn, eh? Then he has the parchment.

(DENNET *turns over things on the table as if looking for the parchment.*)

PENGARD. What?

MRS. PENGARD. Oh, hell! There's rotten luck for you.

(DENNET is scattering papers on table L.C.)

BOROLSKY. What are you looking for, Bill?

DENNET. He may have left it about somewhere.

BOROLSKY. Don't be a fool. He has got it on him. (*Very quietly, but with evident determination, taking out revolver.*) We have got to take it from him, that's all.

(PENGARD comes down to BOROLSKY'S L., his manner a little nervous as he rubs his chin and eyes the revolver. Realizing how deadly the other's purpose is, he does not relish the prospect.)

PENGARD. But, Fleming, that might mean—

BOROLSKY. I know, but it is worth it. Think, Pengard: it is five hundred thousand pounds—and half yours—there's something to take a chance for.

PENGARD. But hanging—

BOROLSKY. Five hundred thousand pounds—and half yours.

PENGARD. But hanging—

MRS. PENGARD. Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds—it's worth it.

PENGARD. Ugh! (*He can already feel the rope round his neck; he drops on to stool R. of the table L.C.*)

(DENNET goes up to the door L. MRS. PENGARD comes to PENGARD'S R.)

BOROLSKY. Nothing is going to stop me from getting it.

ANNA (*still on BOROLSKY'S R.*). Jim, you mustn't think of it. You know what happened last time.

BOROLSKY (R.C.). I don't give a damn.

ANNA. Jim, you promised—

BOROLSKY. Gladys, you're a fool.

ANNA (*taking revolver from him gently*). After all, it's silly to talk about hanging. If he has the parchment on him, I'll get it for you without a bit of trouble—won't take me five minutes.

BOROLSKY (*relieved*). You can?

ANNA. He has fallen for me, hook, line and sinker! Let me have five minutes alone and I'll vamp him.

MRS. PENGARD (*coldly*). It doesn't seem to me the sort of thing a decent married woman ought to do.

PENGARD. Shut up. Decent married women!

ANNA. Don't worry—Jim trusts me. (*Hands BOROLSKY back revolver.*)

BOROLSKY (*putting the revolver in his pocket and then giving ANNA an affectionate pat on the shoulder*). Always! (*He turns up stage a little.*)

ANNA. Yes. (*Coming to C.*) You people get out through that

window and wait in the garden. I'll have the parchment in no time and bring it to you.

(After looking at MRS. PENGARD, PENGARD put tongs down at fire and exits by window. MRS. PENGARD follows him.)

BOROLSKY (coming down to ANNA'S R.). Yes—but.

ANNA (to DENNET, who is up L.C., with an inclination of her head to the window). You follow, Bill.

(DENNET comes down L.C., crosses in front of ANNA and BOROLSKY, following MR. and MRS. PENGARD out through window R.)

BOROLSKY. But suppose he gets suspicious.

ANNA (confidently). Don't worry. He won't.

BOROLSKY (taking her in his arms tenderly). Good luck, old girl! God bless you!

ANNA (with great fondness). It will be all right, Jim.

(He goes out of the window R. ANNA crosses to the fireplace and rings the bell, then goes back to the settee and is powdering her face with a puff from her handkerchief when AMBROSE enters L.)

AMBROSE. Anna! (He advances C.)

ANNA (rising and coming C. to his R.). Mon ami!

AMBROSE (looking about surprised). You are alone?

ANNA (R. of C.). Yes.

AMBROSE (C.). But how—

ANNA. I tell the policeman the truth about Borolsky. Borolsky in terror he escape through the window. The policeman he is after him.

AMBROSE. Good. I hope he catches him.

ANNA. Let us forget him.

AMBROSE. With all my heart.

ANNA. Oh, my friend, you have saved me and I am grateful—so grateful. (She takes his hand, but he draws it away, and moves a little L. below the stool R. of table L.C.)

AMBROSE. Oh, it's quite all right.

ANNA. Oh, I see. I have shocked you again.

AMBROSE. Oh! No! No!

ANNA (coming to AMBROSE on his R.). You are so strong and I—I am only a woman—and strong men—all women love them.

AMBROSE. Then you love me?

ANNA. You take my breath away—

AMBROSE. You love me. (Takes her in his arms.)

ANNA (coily; her left arm round his right shoulder, her right hand slipping into his left jacket-pocket). I have not said so—

AMBROSE. Anna!

ANNA. Chéri!

(He is about to kiss her—her hand steals into the right breast inner

pocket of his jacket where the parchment is. Before she has time to withdraw it, he steps back and with his right hand catches her wrist.)

AMBROSE. So that's what you are after, is it?

ANNA (*dropping her accent and speaking plain English*). Let go my wrist, damn you.

AMBROSE. She isn't even foreign.

ANNA. Let me go, I say. (*Dropping the parchment, she wrenches herself free, and moves to R.C.*)

AMBROSE (*picking up the parchment. The expression in the pirate manner*). Hell-cat! So you invented that story about Bolsheviks and jewels so that I would give you shelter and you could rob me! But you have failed.

ANNA (*crosses C.*). I haven't failed—you are going to give me that parchment. Don't you realize I am not alone in this?

AMBROSE. I am just beginning to realize it—Borolsky, for instance.

ANNA. Yes.

AMBROSE. Most unpleasant fellow.

ANNA (*C.*). He is my husband.

AMBROSE (*crosses L.*). Mes—compliments. And the Policeman, is he in it?

ANNA. Yes! And the Pengards.

AMBROSE. And the Pengards! I said they were a curious couple.

ANNA. Now give me that parchment. Don't you realize they are there now—waiting? Give it to me.

AMBROSE. No. I shall not. I don't care, I won't do it.

ANNA (*goes R. to settee and picks up her wrap*). Don't be a fool. I'll see you get a share.

AMBROSE (*L. Spitting in the pirate manner*). Share!!

ANNA. Listen. Some men can resist money—some men can resist women—no man can resist a gun. I'll give you ten minutes to think it over. (*She comes below the settee and goes out through window R.*)

(*AMBROSE goes over R. and pushes the settee in front of the window. During this action he mutters to himself ad lib. in the pirate manner. He then goes to the revolving bookcase up R. and pours out a large drink of whisky and is about to drink it when POPPY enters hurriedly, slamming the door. He is greatly frightened and chokes over the drink, coming to C. up stage.*)

POPPY (*up L.C.*). Ambrose! Ambrose! There are some men in the garden.

AMBROSE. I know. (*Crossing down L.*)

POPPY. Why . . . where is Madame Valeska? (*Down C., looking about her.*)

AMBROSE (*advancing to POPPY'S L.*). Poppy, she is one of them.

POPPY. One of what?

AMBROSE. One of the crew who are trying to rob us.

POPPY. Oh!

AMBROSE. She confessed it.

POPPY (R.C.). She did? Well—I always knew there was something queer about her.

AMBROSE (C.). Yes—I thought it was the artistic temperament. You don't seem frightened, Poppy. You're wonderful. So courageous. So brave!

POPPY (R.C.). Of course I'm not. (*Looking down.*) Only while you are here.

AMBROSE (C.). But that makes me wonder all the more. (*Coming behind her left shoulder.*) Poppy, you know, you are wonderful.

POPPY. Ambrose, you never said anything like that to me before.

AMBROSE. Well, I don't see how I overlooked it.

POPPY. But after you have gone away—

AMBROSE (*with determination*). Poppy, I am not going.

POPPY (*her voice trembling on a note of deep relief*). You're not?

AMBROSE (C.). No, if I come out of this all right . . .

POPPY (*her hands instinctively rise to the lapels of his coat protectively, her eyes turning apprehensively about the room*). Ambrose, you don't think . . .

AMBROSE (*comforting her*). No, no, of course not. (*She draws away from her position. AMBROSE moves over and stands with his back to the fire as he continues.*) It is only that I am looking forward to to-morrow night after dinner—it will be splendid to come in here after I have had my port—find everything in its proper place and you and Aunt Agatha waiting for me—

POPPY (*keeping her position, her eyes averted*). Then you are not going out into the world to find Romance?

AMBROSE (*with meaning*). No, I've got all I want at home.

POPPY (*with some dissimulation*). Well, of course, if that were true it would save a lot of bother, wouldn't it?

AMBROSE (*as he moves back to her*). Poppy—dear Poppy. (*He is about to take her hand.*)

POPPY (*suddenly; her finger to her lip*). Ssh! (*She crosses to the window, listening.*)

AMBROSE (*somewhat nervously*). Poppy, don't keep on doing that — (*He goes to the R. of the table L.C. and takes up the telephone and tries it.*)

POPPY. Ambrose, you forget the wires are cut. Do they answer?

AMBROSE (*lightly, to comfort her*). No. Not that it matters—the telephone service is so abominable we probably couldn't get an answer anyway.

(POPPY *peers out of the window. AMBROSE moves round the table and opens the drawer.*)

(*Searching about table; with a note of alarm.*) Poppy!

POPPY (*as she crosses to R. of table*). What is the matter?

AMBROSE. My revolver is gone—they have stolen my gun.

POPPY. Oh, Ambrose!

AMBROSE. Oh, Poppy! Did you have Lush called?

POPPY. Yes—he is watching the front door and Cook is at the scullery window.

AMBROSE. That's some comfort.

(*Enter LUSH L., very frightened. He bangs the door. POPPY and AMBROSE are greatly startled.*)

LUSH (*up L.C.*). Beg pardon, sir——

AMBROSE. Well?

LUSH. There is a man coming up the drive.

AMBROSE. Is he alone?

LUSH. I think so, sir.

AMBROSE. What does he look like?

LUSH. Too dark to see, sir.

(*There is a knock outside—dead silence.*)

What shall I do, sir?

(*The knock is repeated.*)

AMBROSE. Let him in, Lush. (*He turns to the fireplace and picks up the shovel.*)

POPPY. Oh, but, Ambrose——

AMBROSE (*crossing to C. up stage*). I think I might be able to tackle them one by one. (*Swings the shovel as a cutlass.*) Let him in.

LUSH. Very good, sir.

(*LUSH goes out.*)

AMBROSE. Go in there, Poppy! (*He points to the room R.*)

(*POPPY hesitates a moment, then crosses AMBROSE to door R., opens it and goes behind it, leaving it partly open, waiting in ambush.*)

AMBROSE, *swinging the shovel, goes down R. and turns facing up to door L.*)

(*JOHNNY JASON enters L.*)

JASON. Ambrose! Ambrose! (*Coming to L.C. he meets POPPY, who, seeing who it is, rushes to him.*)

POPPY (*rushing across to C.*). Mr. Jason! (*Shakes his hands.*)

AMBROSE. Johnny Jason—upon my word, it is Johnny Jason!

JASON (*crossing POPPY, who drops down L.C., he meets AMBROSE in front of the settee*). Yes, it is Johnny Jason.

AMBROSE (*putting the shovel behind his back, he shakes hands heartily with JASON*). I never was so glad to see anyone in my life. (*He*

makes an action with the shovel as if sheathing a cutlass, the shovel falls on the floor, he picks it up and throws it on the settee.)

JASON. I have had the most awful time getting here. Been trying for hours.

AMBROSE. Well, you have come in the nick of time.

JASON (R.C.). What do you mean?

AMBROSE (R.). There is a band of cut-throats, Jason, cut-throats, out there (*pointing to the window*), who swear that if I don't give them this parchment they will break in and murder me.

JASON (C.). Well, don't be a damn fool, give it to them.

AMBROSE. But you don't understand. I can't do that. Jason, there is a treasure hidden here in this house, a pirate's treasure. The story is all here in this parchment (*takes the parchment from his pocket*)—they are trying to rob me.

JASON. A pirate's treasure! Nonsense!

AMBROSE. It isn't nonsense.

JASON. Of course it is.

AMBROSE. Read this, man—read it and you will see for yourself.

JASON. I don't want to read it.

AMBROSE. But it says—

JASON. I know all about what it says.

AMBROSE. You know all about what it says?

JASON. Yes, I wrote it myself.

AMBROSE. You wrote it yourself?

POPPY. You wrote it yourself?

JASON (*turns to POPPY*). Yes, and a hard job it was, too.

AMBROSE. You wrote it yourself? But what for?

JASON. Well, you asked me to sell this place for you, didn't you?

AMBROSE. Yes; but what has that to do—

JASON. You know perfectly well. A lonely place like this is a drug on the market. I had to use intensive methods, so I invented the pirate's treasure. I planted the parchment in the secret cupboard, went to London to a disreputable old fence named Pengard.

AMBROSE. Pengard!

JASON. I thought the story of the treasure would be a tempting bait for him and he would buy the place.

AMBROSE. Well, he didn't make an offer for it. Then I'm not an Applejack after all?

JASON. No.

AMBROSE. And I come from a thoroughly respectable family?

JASON. Of course you do.

AMBROSE (*much relieved, crosses in front to the fire and stands with his back to it*). Of course I do—Jason, how could you have ever imagined such a story?

(POPPY turns to the top of the table and JASON moves a little to R.)

JASON. Well, as a matter of fact I didn't. I merely adapted it for selling purposes.

AMBROSE. Adapted it? How do you mean you adapted it?

JASON (*coming c.*). Yes, you remember old Ben Harlow the boatman?

AMBROSE. Yes—trusty old fellow—his family have served the Applejohns for generations.

JASON. Well, he came to me and claimed to have found a document in that secret cupboard there (*points to L.C. panel*)—a document containing the secret of a pirate's treasure hidden in this house. He wanted me to help him steal the treasure.

AMBROSE. Did he? Trusty old fellow!

JASON. But I recognized the parchment at once as one of the commonest swindles worked by sailors, but it suggested a method to me of selling this house. I borrowed the parchment, copied it and planted the copy there. (*Points to L.C. panel again.*)

AMBROSE. And you gave the original back to Harlow? (*Cross down L.*)

JASON. No, I was never able to. (*He takes a parchment out of his pocket.*)

AMBROSE. Oh, why not?

JASON. You remember he was found murdered in his cottage.

AMBROSE. So he was! New Year's Eve. Borolsky! Give me the parchment.

(*JASON comes to R. of table L.C. and AMBROSE to the L. of it. JASON hands the parchment across the table to AMBROSE, who takes it and examines it. POPPY drops to above AMBROSE, looking at the parchment over his R. shoulder.*)

But this is a genuine old sheepskin document.

JASON. What!

POPPY. Genuine?

AMBROSE. This is real goatskin parchment—smell it. (*He offers it first to JASON and then to POPPY, to smell.*) It's 300 years old. (*Looking at parchment.*) By Jove, here's a big seal—there wasn't one in the copy and there's some more writing under it.

POPPY. Writing?

JASON. I never noticed it.

POPPY. Ambrose, what does it say?

AMBROSE. Wait. (*Reading.*) "To the one who has the wit to find this message"—that's me. "Ye are the worthy one to whom the Applejack treasure shall be given"—you know, that is rather well expressed. "Go to the South-east room overlooking the cliffs"—that is this room—"and stand with your back against the secret cupboard where the secret parchment was hid. Turn a semi-circle"—I am going to try it now. (*Excitedly he thrusts the parchment*

into POPPY's hands.) Poppy, read the directions. Look out of the window, Jason.

(JASON goes to window R. AMBROSE, as he gives his directions to POPPY and JASON, comes round the bottom of the table to C.)

POPPY (reading and following to down stage L.C.). First it says, stand with your back against the secret cupboard.

AMBROSE (goes to panel at back L.C., and puts his back to the book-case). Yes.

POPPY. Take four paces forward.

(AMBROSE does so.)

And turn a semi-circle to the left.

AMBROSE. A somersault to the left?

POPPY. A semi-circle——

(AMBROSE in his excitement has difficulty in deciding which is his left, but finally pivots to his L., facing door L.)

AMBROSE. Yes?

POPPY. Step four paces forward——

AMBROSE (does so). One, two, three, four. (This brings him facing and close to the door L.)

POPPY. Semi-circle to the right.

AMBROSE (same business of uncertainty, then he turns on his R. and faces the panel at an angle.) Yes—go on, Poppy.

POPPY. And take four paces forward.

AMBROSE. How many?

POPPY. Four.

AMBROSE. One, two, three, four. (This brings him below the panel, facing L.). And now——?

POPPY. Then face due north.

(AMBROSE turns back to audience and faces the panel).

JASON (down R.). But that isn't north.

AMBROSE (a little peevishly, speaking over his L. shoulder). Of course it is. Now don't you worry me about the north. Of course it's the north. I've lived here twenty-five years, I ought to know. And I know where east and west is and where the sun rises. What do I do now, Poppy? Go on, go on.

POPPY. Four paces forward.

AMBROSE. One, two, three, four.

POPPY. And the treasure is within your grasp.

(This brings him right back to the secret cupboard where he started from.)

AMBROSE. The treasure is within my grasp. But this is where I started.

JASON. Well, I said you didn't turn north.

AMBROSE. Oh, you shut up. When I have leisure I'll show you where the north is.

POPPY (*reading*). And the treasure is within your grasp.

AMBROSE (*stooping and examining cupboard*). There is no treasure here. Only Madame Valeska's jewels. No. The treasure was hidden here and somebody else has been before us and taken it.

POPPY. Didn't they leave any of it behind? (*Going up to R. of AMBROSE.*)

AMBROSE (*feeling round the cupboard*). Not a thing. (*He rises and comes down, sitting on stool R., and mutters to himself piratically.*)

POPPY (*also feeling round cupboard, her hand reaching to the R.*). Ambrose, here's a loose brick——

(*JASON goes up to the panel, standing L. of POPPY. Suddenly the panel R.C. falls, discovering a larger hiding-place; dust flies out.*)

AMBROSE (*jumps up startled and goes to panel*). Good heavens! —what was that? What have you done, Poppy? Knocking the house down!

POPPY. Oh, Ambrose, look!

AMBROSE (*goes up R.C. to fresh opening*). It's true! It's true! See—see! There is the treasure!

(*AMBROSE on his knees in front of the panel. POPPY goes behind him to its R. and JASON is on its L.*)

POPPY. Isn't it wonderful! See all those bags.

(*AMBROSE takes a bag out and comes C.*)

What is it, Ambrose? What is it?

(*POPPY R. of him. JASON L. of him.*)

AMBROSE (*trying very excitedly to open the bag*). Steady, Poppy, steady. Now, don't get excited.

POPPY. I can't help it! (*Clapping her hands.*) Ambrose, what is it?

(*AMBROSE, in his excitement and his endeavours to open the bag, walks to L. up and round the table twice, followed closely by POPPY and JASON. On reaching the R. of the table for the second time he turns back to C.*)

AMBROSE (*at C., his back to the others, who push against him*). Don't get excited, wait. I'll tell you. (*Dips his hand into the bag.*) Tapioca. (*Turns, showing his open hand to the others.*)

POPPY. Ambrose! They're pearls!

AMBROSE (*greatly excited*). I believe they are. Ssh! Ssh!

JASON. I know a man who will buy pearls!

(*Noise off L.*)

AMBROSE (*stamping about and making a lot of noise himself*).
Quiet! Quiet!

(*Hastily returning the pearls to the bag, he and JASON go up R.C., put the bag back and close the panel. POPPY moves to below the settee.*)

We must put up a fight now. (*Rapidly he moves to the fire and takes up the tongs.*) So, I am an Applejack after all. (*He returns to C. and goes up to the door L., standing with the tongs raised to strike.*)

(*The door opens and MRS. WHATCOMBE rushes in.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*facing AMBROSE*). Ambrose!

AMBROSE (*changing his manner and moving round and round C. snapping the tongs in the air*). I was just catching a moth, Aunt Agatha! We missed them all till you came in.

(*JASON has come to the top of settee. MRS. WHATCOMBE is up L.C. and AMBROSE continues to jump about snapping tongs at imaginary moths.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (L.C.). What on earth is the matter? There has been so much noise here I haven't been able to sleep a wink.

AMBROSE (*coming down a little C.*). Well, I told you I wanted to sell the house.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*down on AMBROSE'S L.*). Have you put it up for auction in the middle of the night?

AMBROSE. I have been showing it to some prospective purchasers.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. At three o'clock in the morning?

AMBROSE. But Jason brought them from town—you know Johnny Jason?

(*JASON comes down R.C.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE. The gentleman who sold you the motor-car that won't run?

AMBROSE (C.). Yes, that's it. Well, he motored some people to see the house and the car broke down again. (*Laughs.*) There, you see, it's a hobby of his. He has got another car to sell.

MRS. WHATCOMBE (L.C.). But why is Poppy up?

AMBROSE. I asked her to get them some coffee.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. You are sure that is all?

AMBROSE. Dear Aunt Agatha, of course I am sure.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. There are not any burglars or anything of that (*taking him by the hand*) sort that you are keeping back from me?

AMBROSE. How could I keep a burglar back from you?

MRS. WHATCOMBE. Oh, what a relief! What a relief! (*Releasing his hand.*)

AMBROSE. Now that your mind is at rest you had better go back to bed again.

MRS. WHATCOMBE. But I am so wide awake I couldn't. (*She turns a little to L.*)

AMBROSE. My dear Aunt Agatha, I don't know what will happen if you upset our regular routine in this way. Must she, Poppy? (*Turns to POPPY.*)

POPPY (*crossing to MRS. WHATCOMBE*). Oh dear no!

(AMBROSE *turns to JASON in front of the settee*. POPPY *leads MRS. WHATCOMBE up L.C.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE (*going up L.C.*). Yes, I suppose that is true. I think, Poppy, if you brought me a little whisky and water I might sleep.

POPPY. Yes! Yes!

AMBROSE. Nothing like good grog to warm a man's innards.

(*Swaggering down to L. he goes to the fireplace, and replaces the tongs, all in the pirate manner.*)

MRS. WHATCOMBE. What is Ambrose saying?

POPPY. Oh! Take no notice of Ambrose, Aunt Agatha.

(POPPY *takes MRS. WHATCOMBE out L.*)

JASON (*at the window R.*). I can see some people out there in the garden.

AMBROSE (*crossing to C.*). Well, we must put up a fight now. I am an Applejack after all.

JASON. What in the world can we do?

AMBROSE. The coastguards . . . that is our chance, the coastguards.

JASON. The coastguards? (*Coming to C. on AMBROSE'S R.*)

AMBROSE. Yes. The coastguard patrol passed here at ten o'clock, that means they return within fifteen minutes from now. Go down the little chalk path leading to the cliffs.

JASON. Good.

AMBROSE. With luck you may meet them.

JASON (*crossing AMBROSE to door L.*). What about the parchment?

AMBROSE (*going L. to the fireplace*). I shall hide it.

JASON. Well, cheerio and good luck.

AMBROSE (*taking the alarm clock off the table, absently moves the hands at its back and sets it on the mantel*). What did you say? Good luck—of course good luck. Now hurry like a good fellow.

(JASON *goes off L. door.*)

(AMBROSE *looks about for hiding-place. Picks up "The Three*

Musketeers" from table L.C. and putting the parchment in it replaces it on shelf.)

"The Three Musketeers." (*He comes down c.*)

(*POPPY enters L. Bangs door.*)

(*AMBROSE is startled out of his life.*)

POPPY (*runs to AMBROSE, turning and looking back, as if danger were imminent*). Oh, Ambrose, there is a man got through the scullery window.

(*PENGARD enters L., banging the door after him, and stands L.C. in a menacing attitude, a revolver in his hand. AMBROSE sees him and adopting the pirate manner swings POPPY over to his R. and stands in an heroic position. At the same moment there is a crash of glass and a splintering of wood and the window right is forced open, BOROLSKY entering and advancing to below the settee. He is followed by DENNET, who remains at the window.*)

(*Seeing BOROLSKY.*) Take care, Ambrose!

(*AMBROSE turns and swings her to his L., backing down L. himself, POPPY shrinking behind him.*)

BOROLSKY (R.C.). Are you going to give it up without trouble or force us to use extreme measures?

(*PENGARD comes L. of c. on a level with the top of the table.*)

AMBROSE. You must give me time to consider.

BOROLSKY. So that your friend who slipped away a while ago can bring assistance? No.

AMBROSE. Then he did get away?

BOROLSKY. Yes, but he won't be back in time to help you. Give me that parchment. (*Moves to c. with revolver in his hand.*)

AMBROSE. Never!

POPPY. Oh, Ambrose, give it to them——

AMBROSE (*advancing*). I've hidden it.

BOROLSKY. Tell me where.

AMBROSE. I've forgotten.

POPPY (L.). Ambrose, give it to them.

BOROLSKY. Come, Applejohn, give in. You are beaten. Fate has decided against you.

AMBROSE. Very well. I will get it for you.

(*He walks up c. to the bookcase, then turns and puts his hand in his pocket. BOROLSKY is holding pistol and follows to his R. PENGARD on his L. DENNET behind the settee.*)

Stupid of me—I must have put it in my pocket. (*Takes it out and hands it to BOROLSKY.*)

BOROLSKY (*goes R., hands his pistol to DENNET and the two examine the parchment by the standard lamp*). This is a fake—look at the water-mark—1920.

DENNET. What!

(*There is a short ring as of the telephone bell. AMBROSE crosses quickly to the top of the table and picks up receiver. The bell is from the alarm clock, which AMBROSE has arranged. But his business with the clock earlier is not of a nature to attract the attention of the audience.*)

PENGARD (*down L.C.*). Hell! They've repaired the telephone.

DENNET. No! The wires are cut.

AMBROSE (*in telephone*). Yes. Jason, come quick. They are here.

BOROLSKY (*springing towards him to c., revolver raised*). Put that telephone down.

(DENNET jumps forward and catches BOROLSKY'S pistol arm.
BOROLSKY struggles.)

AMBROSE. Too late, Borolsky. It is the coastguards.

BOROLSKY. By heavens! it will be the last time!

(PENGARD springs to BOROLSKY'S L. to help DENNET. ANNA enters through window.)

PENGARD. Take care, Jim.

BOROLSKY. Let me go!

DENNET. Don't be a fool, Jim. He has beaten us.

BOROLSKY. Let me go, I say.

PENGARD. No—no!

BOROLSKY. I'll kill him, so help me—I'll kill him.

(DENNET and PENGARD are dragging him away as in the dream. They pass in front of the settee.)

ANNA (*standing above the window*). Jim—Jim, remember. (*She helps the others drag BOROLSKY out through the window, still struggling.*)

AMBROSE (*putting down the telephone and standing L. of table*). So perish all who cross my path!

POPPY (*coming from L. to R. side of the table*). Oh, Ambrose, to think that the telephone was repaired in time!

AMBROSE. But it hasn't been repaired.

POPPY. But the bell! I heard it—and you—

AMBROSE. That wasn't the bell.

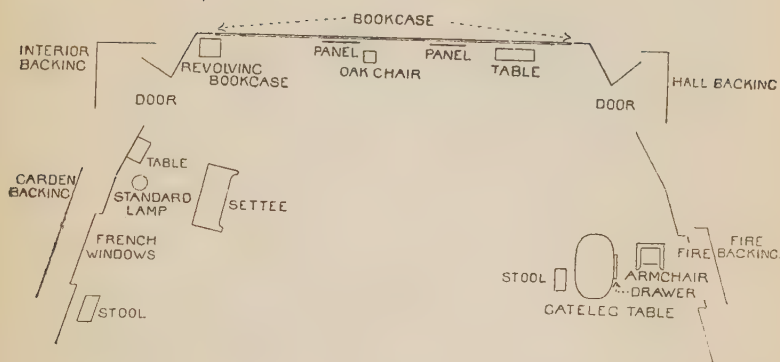
(*He takes the alarm clock from the mantelshelf and rings the bell of it.*)

Aces—all Aces!

(*Puts the clock on the table and steps below it on its L. POPPY down on its R. She falls into his open arms. The clock bell, still ringing.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE PLOT



ACT I

Large Turkey carpet.

Black skin rug at fireplace L.

3 black rugs (2 at doors R. and L.—1 at window R.).

Pair of red curtains at window R. (on cornice pole).

White curtains attached to French windows (R.).

Oak stool (extreme R. below window).

Oak pedestal (above window R.).

Standard lamp (R.).

Settee (R.C.).

Revolving bookcase at back (R.C.)

Small oak table at back L.C.

Oak chair at back C.

Grandfather arm-chair at back L.

Oak gate-leg table L.C.

Oak stool R. of table L.C.

Oak table L. (between door L. and fireplace).

Cigarette-box with cigarettes

Ash-tray

Large box of matches

Pipe and tobacco-pouch with tobacco

Newspaper

Revolver in drawer

Reading-lamp

Telephone

Cushion

"Country Life" } On settee.

Knitting

} All these are against back wall.

} On table L.C.

Knitting on bookcase.

Bell-push L. by fire.

2 electric brackets L. over fireplace.

Ornaments on mantelshelf.

Clock on mantelshelf.

Loose books in bookcase on scene at back.

Off stage L.—Tray with 3 coffee cups, saucers, pot, sugar basin, cream jug.

Glass jug of water.

Silver tray with whisky, siphon and 4 glasses.

Candlestick with matches on (whisky tray).

Photo of house.

Jewel-case for ANNA.

Knocker some way off.

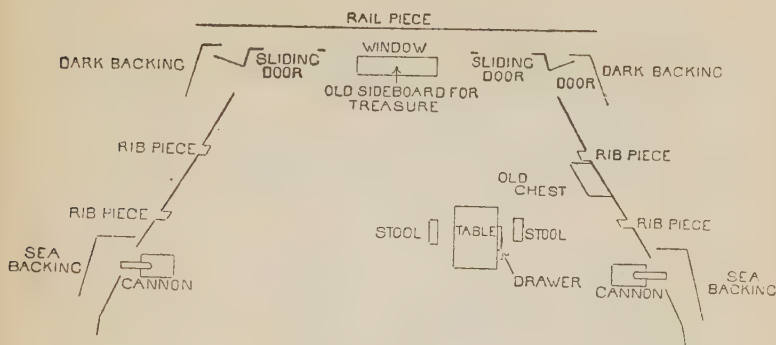
Off stage R.—Wind machine.

2 electric torches (MR. and MRS. PENGARD).

Jemmy for PENGARD.

Off stage at back.—Parchment in secret panel L.C.

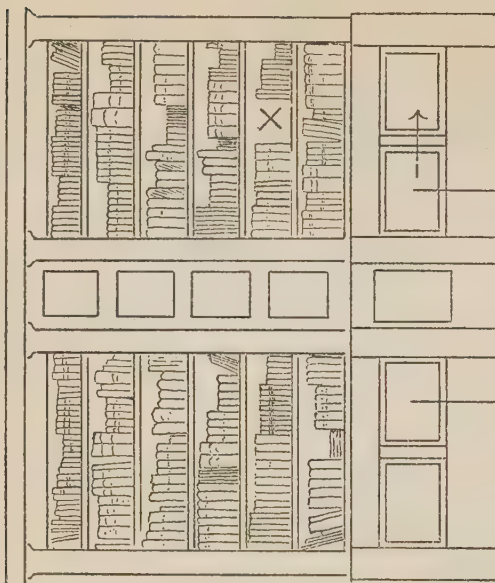
SEA CLOTH WITH STERN OF SHIP



ACT II

Massive old oak table L.C.
 2 heavy oak stools R. and L. of table L.C.
 2 guns at portholes R. and L.
 Old oak sideboard at back c.
 Gold ornaments on sideboard.
 Treasure chest with jewels inside (inside sideboard).
 Reading-lamp (backed with black cardboard).
 Library table, stool and arm-chair—as used in Act I.
 Parchment on table L.C.
 Alarm clock on table L.C.
 3 packs of cards in drawer of table L.C.
 3 rum pannikins off L.
 Cutlasses and guns for the crew.
 Dagger for PENGARD.
 Spring dagger for AMBROSE.
 Snuff-box for AMBROSE.
 Black screen to back BOROLSKY.

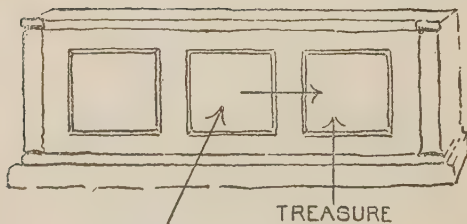
BOOKCASE ACTS I AND III



PARCHMENT PANEL
TO SLIDE FROM
R TO L

TREASURE PANEL
TO FALL FORWARD ON
HINGE AT LOWER EDGE

THE SPACE MARKED X TO CONTAIN TWO OR
THREE REAL BOOKS



TREASURE

OLD SIDEBOARD ACT II
PANEL SLIDES TOL

ACT III

Furniture same as at finish of Act I.

Parchment with seal for JASON.

Parchment for AMBROSE.

Off stage L.—Jewel-case for ANNA.

Revolvers for PENGARD, MRS. PENGARD, BOROLSKY and DENNET.

Jemmies for BOROLSKY and DENNET.

Revolver in drawer of table L.C.

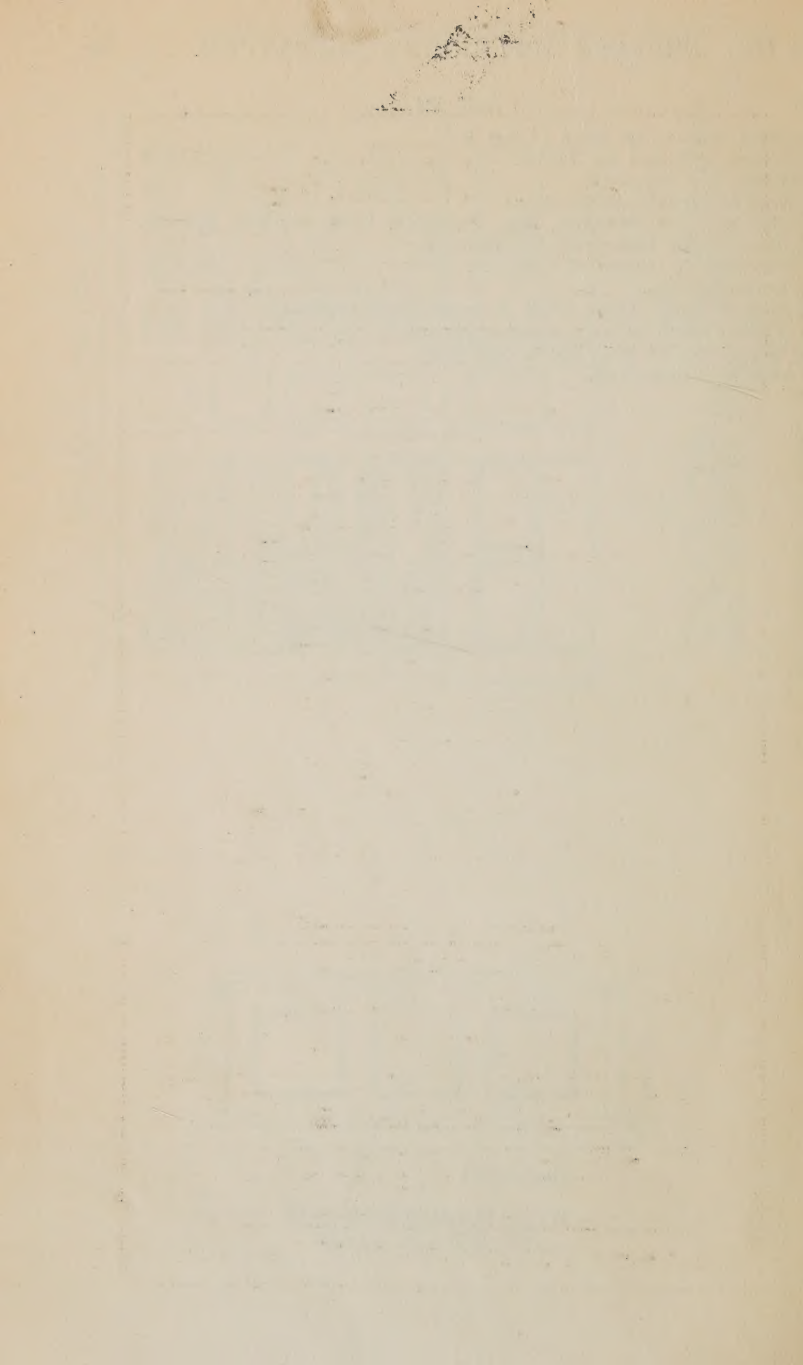
Coffee for two.

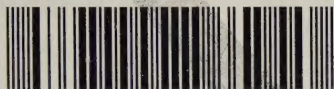
Off stage at back.—Loose brick in small secret cupboard.

Fuller's earth in large secret cupboard.

Bag of rice in large secret cupboard.

Off stage R.—Glass crash.





1900

Continued from second page of cover.

SCENERY

Our stock of Scenery consists of:—

An Oak Chamber Scene

A Grey Panel Scene

A Drawing Room Scene

A Woodland Scene

An Exterior of a House

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